

In this issue[ERC highlights deteriorating humanitarian situation](#) P.1[Assistance across the country](#) P.1[WHO warns of impending health crisis](#) P.2[Violence and displacement raise protection concerns](#) P.3[Rapid increase in refugee numbers](#) P.4[Funding fails to keep up with needs](#) P.5**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Assistance reaches both government and opposition-controlled areas.
- Emergency Relief Coordinator calls for increased humanitarian access and respect of International Humanitarian Law.
- WHO warns of impending health crisis.
- Surge in refugee registrations in neighbouring countries.
- Response efforts severely undermined by lack of funds.

FIGURES

Population	22 million
# of IDPs	1.2 million
Affected pop.	2.5 million (incl. IDPs)
# of refugees	>170,000

FUNDING (US\$)**180 million**

sought by the UN for activities inside Syria (US\$)

74.7 million

Received/pledged so far for UN activities inside Syria

193 million

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

64.3 million

received so far for Regional Refugee Response Plan



ERC visit highlights deteriorating humanitarian situation

During her visit to Syria from 14 to 16 August 2012, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Valerie Amos, expressed concern at the growing humanitarian consequences of intensifying violence. UN agencies now estimate that there are over 2.5 million people in need in Syria, including 1.2 million displaced. This represents more than a twofold increase in the number of people in need since the ERC's previous visit to Syria in March. Needs are particularly acute in the sectors of food, shelter and non-food items, health and water, sanitation and hygiene. The situation has also become critical in the education sector. With many schools being used as shelter for internally displaced people (IDPs), rapid solutions need to be found to allow the term to start normally in September.

Ordinary men, women and children continue to be caught up in the violence and have few alternatives as to where to seek refuge. Noting that violence has become more intense and is too often indiscriminate, the ERC reminded all parties of their obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians.

Assistance reaches both government and opposition-controlled areas

Local partners play an indispensable role in the response

The UN and humanitarian partners are reaching more people across the country every month. Last month, WFP delivered assistance to areas of intense conflict, including Rural Damascus, Dera'a and Aleppo. UN agencies cooperate with local organisations, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and others, to ensure a wide network of distribution. Some 90 national NGOs are being authorized by the Government to cooperate with international aid organisations. UNICEF works with 40 local partners. In July, WHO signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health to expand collaboration with approved NGOs. Other UN agencies and international NGOs are working to establish similar partnerships.

Food assistance provided to all governorates

WFP's food distributions are reaching all governorates in Syria. In its July distribution round, the agency dispatched food for 824,000 people. Between 9 and 15 August, food was dispatched for almost 200,000 people in Homs (22,500 people), Hama (26,750 people), Deir-ez-Zor (15,000 people), Rural Damascus (7,500 people), Damascus (20,000 people), Dara'a (6,750 people), Idlib (15,000 people), Tartous (13,750 people), Al-Hasakkeh (30,000 people), Lattakia (15,375 people), Al-Raqqa (15,000 people) and

Sweida (5,000 people). WFP expects to deliver food assistance to 850,000 people in August, including in areas of increased need, such as Aleppo (125,000 people), Rural Damascus (150,000 people) and Homs (125,000 people). In the three weeks leading up to 9 August, ICRC provided food assistance to more than 125,000 people (mostly IDPs) in Aleppo, Homs, Idlib, Hama, Latakia, Hassakeh, Al-Raqqa and Damascus.

More than 280,000 people have received essential non-food items to date

The distribution of essential items continues in areas affected by conflict. During the reporting period, hygiene kits, blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets and other basic items were provided by UNHCR and UNFPA to over 60,000 people, bringing the total number of people assisted in 2012 to over 280,000. As of 15 August, UNHCR and SARC started providing one-off cash distributions to displaced people. So far, 440 people have received cash assistance in Al-Nabak, totalling US\$13,500.

Medical supplies provided to assist 700,000 people

Since the start of the crisis, WHO has provided the Ministry of Health SARC with medical equipment, including surgical, first aid and emergency kits, to assist 700,000 people. WHO has also shipped 60,000 blood safety kits to the Syrian Blood Bank to ensure safety and quality in surgery and trauma care. Support is provided by WHO to three mobile clinics in Rural Damascus and one mobile clinic in Homs. 12,500 people have received treatment so far.

UNFPA and local NGO partners have provided reproductive health services and psychosocial support to 4,000 women in recent weeks. In addition, about 1,200 women in Damascus and Rural Damascus have received vouchers for free access to reproductive health services. Around 6,500 women have been supported through the delivery of reproductive health kits to SARC branches across the country.

Water and sanitation interventions benefit 370,000 people

UNICEF and international partners are working to expand assistance in the water and sanitation sector. The situation is precarious in many schools hosting IDPs and water and sanitation infrastructure has been damaged during the violence. Over the last three weeks, ICRC, in cooperation with SARC has improved drinking water in 37 schools and residential areas in Damascus, Rural Damascus and Aleppo, benefitting about 70,000 people. Support to water and sanitation facilities in Homs has assisted more than 300,000 people accommodated across more than 100 schools.

WHO warns of impending health crisis

Stocks of essential medicines depleted

An assessment by WHO has revealed that essential drugs stocks within the Ministry of Health are low. Clinics and hospitals have already run out of certain types of antibiotics and blood tests. The latter increases risk of hepatitis B and C infections, as well as transmission of HIV. Some storage facilities for imported medicines have been destroyed, affecting the availability and capacity to deliver medicines, especially for non-communicable diseases. The combined effects of economic sanctions, currency fluctuations, unavailability of hard currency, increases in operational costs and violence in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus, have negatively impacted production of medicines in Syria. Before the start of the violence, more than 90 per cent of medicines in Syria were locally produced. According to WHO, \$20 million is urgently required to cover the needs for essential drugs for the period from August 2012 to the end of March 2013.

Reduced access to health services

According to the Ministry of Health, 38 out of 88 hospitals in the country have been damaged or affected by the violence. Of these, 16 are currently out of service. In addition, 149 out of 2,000 health facilities have sustained damage or been otherwise affected. Private healthcare facilities account for about 60 per cent of health care services in Syria. Data on damage to private facilities has not been systematically collected, but several hospitals in Rural Damascus (At Tal, Duma) and Aleppo have been damaged. Many health facilities, including hospitals, are inaccessible due to long distances and limitations on public transport as a result of fuel shortages. In some areas, patients are unable to access health facilities due to security concerns.

Violence and displacement raise protection concerns

Growing number of internally displaced in need of assistance

Due to intensifying violence, the number of IDPs has grown significantly during the past weeks and is now over 1.2 million. Many IDPs have sought shelter in schools, mosques and other public buildings, which are ill-equipped to host them. Despite meagre resources, local communities continue to provide assistance and shelter to a significant number of displaced. UN agencies are also stepping up assistance. As of 7 August, the Ministry of Education reported that 271 schools across 12 out of the country's 14 Governorates hosted displaced people. In addition, UNRWA reports close to 8,000 IDPs in its facilities in Damascus and Aleppo. Water and sanitation services, food, non-food items, and healthcare are the most pressing needs.

Women and children particularly vulnerable

A recent report by War Child highlighted that children have been the victims of military operations. Women have been subjected to discrimination, abuse and violation of privacy. Some women have been forced to surrender male relatives under threat of physical harm.

Many IDPs have stayed in schools and other public buildings for a prolonged period of time. These shelters are often overcrowded, have limited private space and often have overstretched sanitary facilities. Women and children are particularly vulnerable in this context, especially if they have been separated from male relatives.

Refugee communities in Syria anxious about the future

Large refugee communities exist within Syria, including Iraqi, Somali, Sudanese and Afghan refugees. There is also a community of about 500,000 Palestine refugees. UNHCR reports growing anxiety among refugees as needs continue to rise. Many refugees living in Damascus and Rural Damascus were displaced in the recent violence and have taken shelter in public and school buildings. Palestine refugee camps in the Damascus and Aleppo areas are hosting thousands of Syrian IDPs.

Refugees who have sought shelter in schools receive basic food assistance from UNHCR in cooperation with the SARC. Local charities and individuals also provide in-kind contributions. Health teams are operating in Braze and Zahera in Damascus. UNHCR also operates two refugee hotlines to provide counselling and assistance. Refugees increasingly report concerns about threats, financial difficulties, and food assistance. Iraqi refugees continue to request information on return to Iraq and resettlement. More than 26,000 Iraqi refugees have left Syria since 18 July due to increased violence.

IOM reports that requests for evacuation assistance have increased. More than 3,000 people are awaiting exit permits from sponsors and/ or employers. Some are reluctant to leave the country as payments for employment are pending. IOM continues to offer assistance to those seeking support to leave.

Rapid increase in refugee numbers

The number of Syrians seeking refuge in neighbouring countries is increasing rapidly. More than 170,000 refugees had been registered as of 16 August. This represents an increase of nearly 40,000 refugees over the last two weeks. Lebanon and Turkey have seen registration hikes of 10,000 and 15,000 refugees, respectively.

Country	Registered and/ or assisted refugees
Iraq	15,096
Jordan	46,898
Lebanon	46,672
Turkey	61,450
Total	170,166

Source: UNHCR as of 16 August.
Refugee figures are based on estimates and may vary.

Iraq expands camps

The number of Syrian refugees registered in Iraq increased by about 3,000 people over the last two weeks. Refugees arriving in Iraq have generally crossed from the northern Syrian governorates of Qamishli and Hassakeh. A new refugee camp has opened at Al Qa'im to accommodate the growing number of refugees. The camp will have a capacity to host more than 3,000 people. Another camp is planned for Al Kasak in Rabi'a. WFP provides assistance to a caseload of 5,000 refugees in Iraq.

Refugees in Za'atari camp in Jordan face challenging conditions

Conflict, particularly in the southern governorate of Dara'a, continues to force Syrians to flee to Jordan. Fighting in the border area between Syrian and Jordan is impeding the movement of refugees.

New arrivals are now taken directly from the border to the Za'atari refugee camp. Almost 7,000 refugees are currently hosted in the camp. Conditions in Za'atari are challenging. Strong desert winds and high summer temperatures make the area inhospitable. UNHCR and other UN agencies and humanitarian partners are working to improve camp infrastructure, especially in terms of water, sanitation and access to cooking facilities. WFP provides 12,000 daily meals to Syrian refugees and has delivered food vouchers to almost 23,000 beneficiaries. Health clinics have been set up in Za'atari and are operational. UNICEF delivers up to 270,000 litres of water per day to the camp and continues to expand recreational activities.

Major increase in refugee registration in Lebanon

Registration capacity has been improved through the opening of a new registration facility in Tripoli on 13 August. Thousands of Syrians are waiting to register as registration continues in the Beka'a Valley and Beirut. Registration is critical in order to receive medical care and to enrol children in Lebanese public schools. Most Syrian refugees are staying with host families or rent apartments. However, an increasing number are seeking shelter in schools in the north and the east of the country. UNHCR is seeking alternative shelters to host IDPs prior to the start of the next school year.

WFP is providing food vouchers to 27,000 refugees in Lebanon. Another 7,000 refugees have received food parcels. Essential items have been delivered in cooperation with NGO partners to about 5,000 refugees.

Upward trend in refugee flow to Turkey

The number of refugees arriving in Turkey has increased over the past two weeks, with up to 2,000 refugees crossing the border on some days. The majority of recent arrivals have fled the violence in Aleppo. The Turkish Government opened a new camp facility in Akcakale on 6 August. The new camp is already hosting more than 8,000 refugees. There are currently nine camps accommodating Syrian refugees in the country. Recent arrivals are temporarily hosted in boarding schools in the cities of Gaziantep, Kilis, Osmaniye, Hahramanmara and Adana until further camps are operational. The Turkish authorities are planning to open up to thirteen new sites in order to increase hosting capacity from 50,000 to 100,000 refugees.

Funding fails to keep up with needs

Lack of funds impedes humanitarian efforts, ERC says

Lack of funds remains a major impediment to more robust humanitarian efforts. As noted by the ERC during her visit to Syria, more could be achieved immediately if sufficient funds were made available. As of 17 August, the \$180 million humanitarian response plan targeting 1 million people in need inside Syria is only 45 per cent funded. Despite growing needs, the sectors of education, health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) remain particularly underfunded at 16 per cent, 30 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. Additional donor support is urgently required.

Humanitarian Response Plan being revised to reflect growing needs

Due to intense violence, needs have increased significantly since the launch of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan in June. UN agencies estimate that there are now more than 2.5 million people in need, including 1.2 million displaced. In order to reflect this new reality, UN agencies, together with government line ministries, are revising the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan.

Regional Refugee Response Plan

Despite the rapid increase in the number of refugees in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, the \$193 million Regional Refugee Response Plan is only 33 per cent funded.

For further information, please contact:

Aurelien Buffler, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, buffler@un.org, Tel. (+1) 917 367 5089

Yasmine Rockenfeller, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, rockenfeller@un.org, Tel. (+41) 22 917 2609

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