

HIGHLIGHTS

- Following approval to use the Nusaybin crossing point on the Syria /Turkey border, WFP joins UN inter-agency convoy to provide assistance to northeast Syria.
- WFP food rations reach Ar-Raqqa for the first time since November 2013, while an inter-agency convoy facilitates WFP assistance into besieged location in rural Homs for the first time in 9 months.
- The opening of Jordan's Azraq camp is announced for 30 April, while over 5,5000 refugees cross the border into Jordan during the reporting period.
- Three years after the beginning of the conflict, almost one million refugees have sought shelter and protection in Lebanon.
- WFP and Turkish Red Crescent field teams complete camp assessment missions to new camps for possible inclusion in the e-card programme.



SYRIA

Following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2139 on 22 February, urging all parties to the conflict to grant unfettered humanitarian access to assist those in need in Syria, Syrian and Turkish authorities approved the use of the Nusaybin crossing point on the border between Syria and Turkey to deliver humanitarian assistance to Al-Hasakeh governorate. With all road access interrupted since September 2013, WFP is participating in a UN inter-agency convoy to deliver much needed food assistance to vulnerable households in the governorate.

Significant gains were made by WFP in accessing populations living in hard-to-reach areas across the country in the last few weeks. Since the adoption of Resolution 2139 on 22 February, WFP reached 112,500 people living in previously inaccessible areas in five governorates, including Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Dar'a, Idleb, and Homs. Of these, 37,500 were reached through inter-agency convoys, while the remaining 75,000 were reached through WFP's regular programmes. While over 3 million people are estimated to live in hard-to-reach areas across the country, a lack of access hinders the capacity to assess the needs on the ground.

In spite of these advancements, widespread insecurity and access restrictions continue to prevent WFP from reaching several areas inside Syria, hindering the provision of sustained and predictable humanitarian assistance to approximately 500,000 people, amounting to 12 percent of the over 4 million targeted beneficiaries across the entire country.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

	Planned*	Dispatched	Distributed
JANUARY CYCLE			
General Food Rations	4,250,000	3,670,835	3,651, 545
Wheat Flour	1,504,000	1,193,600 ***	720,995
Supplementary Feeding Programme	240,000**	91,471	85,005
FEBRUARY CYCLE			
General Food Rations	4,250,000	3,713,730	Ongoing
Wheat Flour	1,504,000	973,340***	Ongoing
Supplementary Feeding Programme	240,000**	94,909	127,498****
MARCH CYCLE			
General Food Rations	4,250,000	Ongoing	Ongoing
Wheat Flour	1,504,000	Ongoing	Ongoing
Supplementary Feeding Programme	240,000**	Ongoing	ongoing

*WFP adopts a flexible operational approach in order to maximise the efficiency of its response to the fast evolving conditions on the ground. As such, it takes into account population movements and access challenges, redirecting assistance to accessible populations in need as required. As a result, more than 100% of targets may be met in areas where actual needs exceed the original plan.

**The planning figures for the Supplementary Feeding Programme apply to the entire year, while a lower number of beneficiaries is currently being targeted on a monthly basis. The programme includes distribution of Plumpy'Doz® in the central and Southern governorates and Nutributter in the north-eastern governorates and Aleppo.

*** The current monthly ration of wheat flour per family is 12.5 Kg. At present, households receive a 25 Kg bag of wheat flour every two months.

****February distributions of Plumpy'Doz® and Nutributter® exceeded targets, as some quantities of Plumpy'Doz® dispatched in January were distributed only in February. Additionally, the Ministry of Health took advantage of the on-going national polio vaccination campaign to increase coverage of the blanket feeding programme in Rural Damascus.

Food Dispatches: The March cycle showed a significant improvement in the dispatch rate compared to previous months, owing to an enhanced supply chain that allowed all commodities to be available prior to the start of the cycle. As a result, by 18 March WFP had completed 68 percent of its dispatch plan for the cycle, marking a 32 percent increase as compared to the same time in February. With March dispatches so far having reached 13 out of the 14 Syrian governorates, access to Deir-ez-Zor is again disrupted after 5,400 rations successfully reached the governorate at the end of February, the first time since October 2013.

In February, WFP dispatched almost 743,000 family food rations, sufficient to assist over 3.7 million people for a month, or 87 percent of the planned beneficiaries for the cycle. In addition, over 5,000 bags of fortified wheat flour were dispatched to assist over 1 million people, almost 70 percent of the original plan targeting 1.5 million beneficiaries. Food dispatches reached 13 out of the 14 Syrian governorates, with Ar-Raqqa not receiving any of the planned allocations for the fourth consecutive month, and Deir-ez-Zor being reached with only 9 percent of the food planned for this cycle due to widespread insecurity and the presence of armed groups along the access routes.



Food Distributions: WFP partners are currently distributing the rations received as part of the February cycle, targeting approximately 3.7 million beneficiaries in all Syrian governorates except Ar-Raqqa, which received none of the allocated assistance in February. In the meantime, the March cycle is ongoing and distributions to beneficiaries are underway in those areas where February distributions have already been completed.

January cycle distributions concluded during the first week of March reaching over 3.65 million people across 12 of the 14 Syrian governorates, as no distributions could be conducted in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor where insecure road conditions continued to prevent access. The capacity of partners was challenged in January to rapidly manage all assistance received, leading to a delay in concluding the distribution cycle.

Ready-to-eat rations: Families faced with sudden displacement were supported by locally procured ready-to-eat rations. By 16 March, ready-to-eat rations were distributed to over 82,572 newly displaced people in Rural Damascus, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Tartous, Quneitra and Aleppo governorates.

Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme: In 2014, WFP plans to reach a total of 240,000 children aged 6-23 months in all 14 governorates with measures to prevent malnutrition in young children, with Plumpy'Doz® distributed in the central and southern governorates and Nutributter in the north-eastern governorates and Aleppo. Currently targeting up to 91,000 children each month, WFP is gradually scaling-up the programme to meet this year's target. However, access constraints in the north-east and a shortage of technical partners have hindered a rapid scale up of the intervention.

In February distributions of supplementary feeding products reached 127,498 children in both collective shelters and host communities, exceeding by 34 percent the target for the cycle. This included 111,380 children reached with Plumpy'Doz® and 16,118 children provided with Nutributter® in the northeastern governorates. This discrepancy resulted from some quantities of Plumpy'Doz® which were dispatched in January but were distributed only in February. Additionally, the on-going national polio vaccination campaign carried by the Ministry of Health allowed an increase in the coverage of the blanket feeding programme in Rural Damascus. Furthermore, 2,500 children were provided with Plumpy'Doz® in Rural Homs through an inter-agency convoy, which reached Al-Houle at the beginning of March.

Northeastern Syria

Al-Hasakeh

Significant security constraints have disrupted access to Al-Hasakeh since July 2013, preventing WFP from providing regular and sustained assistance to over 227,000 people targeted in the governorate. Significant waves of displacement have affected the governorate over the past weeks, mainly towards Qamishli and the rural areas surrounding Al-Hasakeh city. Over the reporting period, new IDP arrivals from the besieged villages of Nabul and Zahraa in rural Aleppo were reported, with an average of 150-200 people reportedly entering the governorate each week from these locations.

Continuous population displacements, combined with disrupted market supply chains, food shortages and inflated food prices resulted in rapidly deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the governorate, leading WFP to seek alternative ways of reaching the population in need. With all road access interrupted since September 2013, WFP airlifted from Iraq over 16,000 family food rations in February, providing sufficient assistance to support over 80,000 people, or 35 percent of the targeted population. Following government approval at the beginning of March for the delivery of humanitarian assistance from Turkey, WFP suspended airlifts from Iraq. Negotiations for the implementation of an inter-agency convoy through the Nusaybin crossing point on the Syria-Turkey border are currently underway, with WFP planning to deliver assistance to priority areas in the governorate.

Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor

Deteriorating security conditions continue to prevent humanitarian deliveries to Deir-ez-Zor, where access has been disrupted since October 2013. Following a brief breakthrough at the end of February, which allowed a limited quantity of food to reach the governorate covering the need of just nine percent of the intended beneficiaries, a relapse in fighting along the main access routes resulted in the inability to deliver humanitarian assistance in March. As a result, over 294,000 people targeted have so far not received any of the allocated assistance for the current cycle.

Over the reporting period, WFP assistance reached the governorate of Ar-Raqqa for the first time since November 2013, owing to successful negotiations conducted through local partners. On 8 March, 4,000 family food rations were dispatched to the governorate, while an additional 3,600 rations reached Ar-Raqqa after being diverted from Deir-ez-Zor for security reasons. Overall, the assistance provided so far will be enough to support just over 13 percent of the almost 285,000 people targeted in the governorate.

While some gains have been made over the past weeks, WFP remains unable to guarantee predictable and sustained assistance to almost 580,000 people targeted in two governorates, where violence, a shortage of food and high market prices are causing a rapid deterioration of the humanitarian conditions.

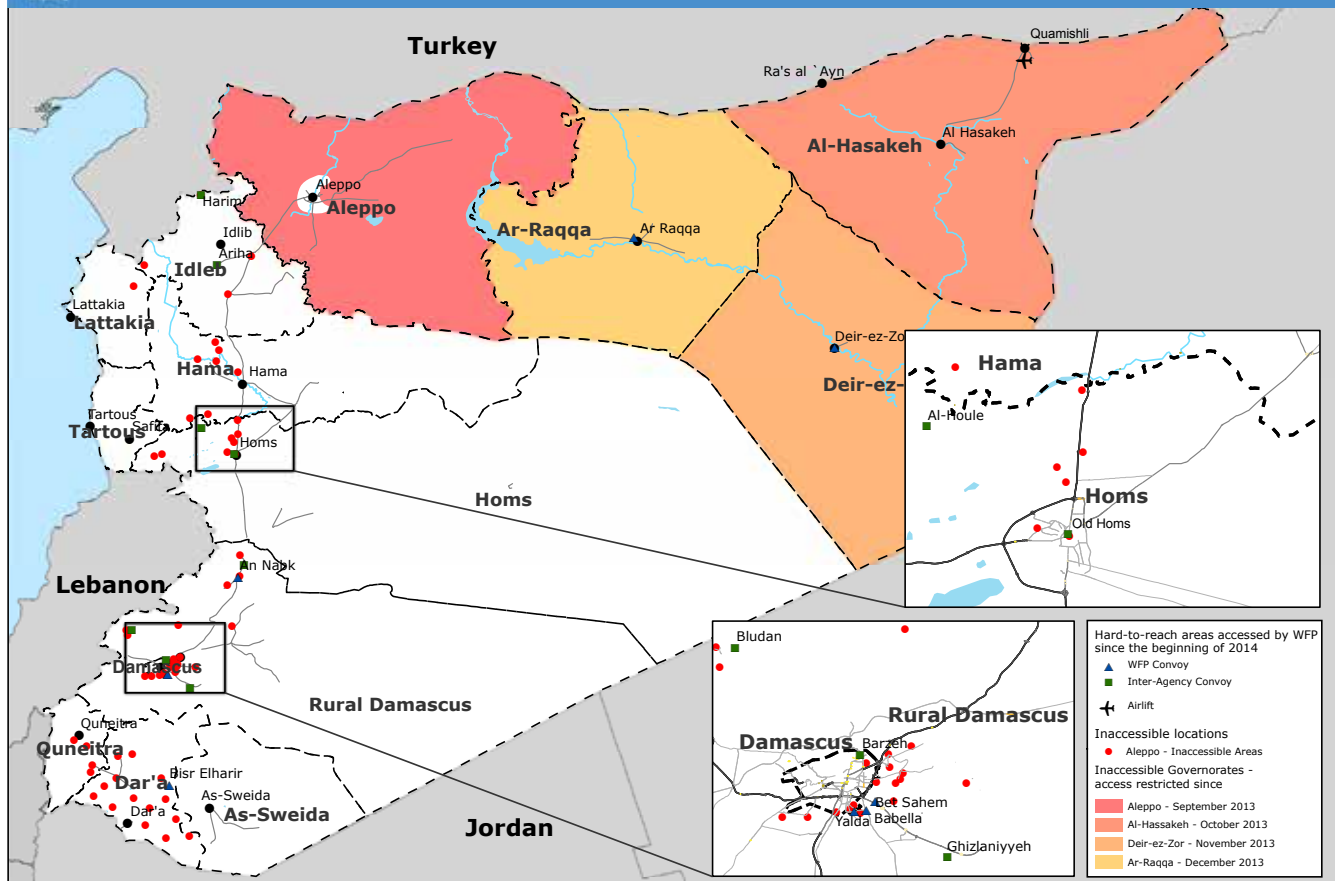
MARKET ANALYSIS

The partial easing of road blockages in the north-eastern governorates resulted in improved availability of supplies in Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor markets, leading to a slight drop in food prices over the reporting period. As a result, during the first two weeks of March most basic food commodities in the two governorates registered a decline in prices ranging from 9 to 30 percent, including rice, lentils, oil and sugar. Moreover, in Al-Hasakeh, intensified informal trade from Iraq contributed to a reduction in the price of fuel, leading to a decrease by 20 percent in the price of butane compared to the last week of February.

In the rest of the northeast, prices for fuel increased substantially, rising by up to 150 percent in Ar-Raqqa. Due to a lack of regulation, significant increases were registered in the prices of subsidized bread in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, which rose by 100 and 67 percent respectively. Moreover, instability in the area continued to disrupt the general functioning of markets, particularly in Ar-Raqqa, where high inflation is severely limiting access of the most vulnerable households to basic goods.



SYRIA CRISIS Hard-to-reach areas inside Syria - March 2014



Northern Syria

Aleppo

The western neighbourhoods of Aleppo city continue to witness a sustained influx of IDPs from the eastern areas, albeit at a reduced pace owing to the proliferation of checkpoints restricting movement. Over the reporting period, more than 98,500 people have reportedly been displaced from eastern Aleppo city, seeking sanctuary mainly in western Aleppo city and the Turkish border. With a population of over 1.5 million people, western Aleppo neighbourhoods are rapidly running out of means to accommodate the new arrivals, leaving the IDPs with no choice but to sleep in parks and other public places, without food, warm clothes and clean water.

In response to the increased needs resulting from the large IDP influx, WFP is increasing food deliveries to partners in the western areas of Aleppo city, where it is currently providing support to up to 750,000 people in need of assistance, approximately half of the population estimated to live in the area. However, since August 2013 WFP has been unable to reach the eastern neighbourhoods of Aleppo city, as well as the rural areas of the governorate, home to an estimated 1.2 million people. Reports from SARC indicate rapidly escalating humanitarian needs in these areas, where heavy fighting continue to result in increasingly damaging consequences for the civilian population.

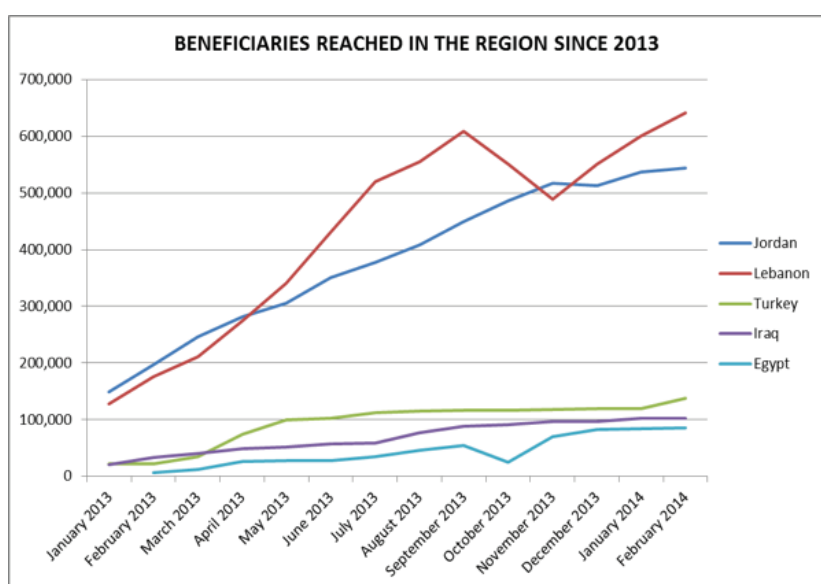
Central Syria

Homs

The governorate of Homs has witnessed an escalation of violence in the past few months, causing more displacements and significant damage to the civilian population, widespread infrastructural damage and a deterioration of the humanitarian conditions. In February, WFP delivered enough assistance to the governorate to meet the needs of over 570,000 people, targeting over 100 percent of the planned beneficiaries to respond to heightened humanitarian needs in the area. However, widespread insecurity and access constraints continue to prevent humanitarian deliveries to hotspot locations in the governorate. While needs are difficult to assess given the access constraints, concerns grow over the humanitarian conditions of an estimated 500,000 people believed to be living in these areas, who have not received humanitarian assistance for a protracted period of time.

On 6 March, an inter-agency convoy reached the village of Al-Houle, in rural Homs, allowing humanitarian assistance in the location for the first time since May 2013. Through the convoy, WFP delivered a total of 4,000 family food rations, providing sufficient assistance to support 20,000 beneficiaries for one month, close to 30 percent of the estimated population. A rapid needs assessment conducted during the mission indicated that of the total 70,000 people living in the area, 8,000 are internally displaced. Severe shortages of food were found, with limited food available on local markets smuggled through the river from nearby villages. In addition, high commodity prices were found to further erode access to food, increase reliance on negative coping strategies, contributing to greater vulnerability to food insecurity.

WFP REGIONAL OPERATIONS OVERVIEW



Since the start of its operations in the region, WFP has responded to a growing number of vulnerable Syrian refugees, providing food assistance that returns a sense of normalcy to the lives of affected populations. Today, three years since the start of the crisis in Syria, WFP continues to adapt its programming to reflect the needs of Syrian families and host communities.

As Figure 1. illustrates, operations throughout the region have been gradually scaling up to reach the growing numbers of families seeking shelter and support. Efforts are also being made in each of the countries to ensure available funding is used as effectively as possible by strengthening efforts to ensure assistance reaches those who need it the most.

As required by the respective governments, WFP only provides assistance to refugees living in camps in Turkey and Iraq, while continuing to advocate for the provision of assistance to vulnerable refugees living in host communities throughout both countries. In Lebanon, where WFP supports refugees living in host communities following the country's non-camp policy, a targeted assistance programme commenced in October 2013, following the completion of the inter-agency, multi-sectoral Vulnerability Assessment to identify those needing continued assistance. Similarly, WFP and the humanitarian community in Jordan plan to introduce targeted assistance in the second quarter of 2014, following the completion of the Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise, which will make up part of the Inter-Agency Vulnerability and Targeting Exercise.

In Egypt, where WFP assistance commenced in February 2013 following a formal request from the Government of Egypt, WFP is providing geographically targeted voucher assistance to Syrian refugees in poorer neighbourhoods of Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta. In addition, WFP, in partnership with the UN Relief Works Agency, is also assisting Palestinian refugees from Syria who have fled to Egypt. As the graph shows, while the number of beneficiaries has been steadily increasing since the start of operations, issues with the partner supermarket in Cairo in October 2013, whereby WFP was unable to complete its voucher distribution, led to a dip in the number of beneficiaries reached before operations returned to normal the following month. Mitigation measures have since been put in place to ensure that such issues do not arise in the future.

As with all other countries in the region, it is evident that not all refugees registered with UNHCR in Egypt are food insecure. While WFP has so far been targeting its assistance geographically, it plans to transition to vulnerability targeting in 2014 to ensure that the most vulnerable and food-insecure are supported in a sustained manner.

LEBANON

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Refugees registered and awaiting registration:
962,385

Reached in February: 642,981
577,547 vouchers (94% of operational plan*)
65,434 parcels (101% of operational plan**)

Plan for March*: 734,344
669,794 vouchers
64,550 Parcels

**Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR manifest where WFP targets approximately 70% of the caseload.*

***Actual number of people reached with food parcels is higher than the operational plan due to recent refugee influx in Aarsal*

Three years after the beginning of the devastating conflict in Syria, nearly a million refugees have fled into Lebanon to seek shelter and protection. Lebanon, a country of four million people, has demonstrated unfaltering solidarity towards displaced populations by receiving 38 percent of the Syrian refugees, the largest refugee number in the region. The number of Syrian refugees hosted by Lebanon as a ratio of its population would be equivalent to nearly 15 million in France, 32 million in Russia or 71 million in the United States. To keep up with the ever expanding refugee population, WFP has expanded its operation over 20 times since July 2012.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

During the reporting period the number of refugees has continued to increase with nearly 12,000 newly refugees registered or awaiting registrations according to UNHCR data.

With March distributions currently ongoing, WFP has so far reached 618,190 beneficiaries through either e-cards or food parcels. The majority of the beneficiaries simply had their e-card automatically uploaded on 5 March, while newly arrived refugees are being assisted with one-off food parcels. WFP is planning to assist 734,344 beneficiaries in March alone.

WFP continued discussions with the World Bank and the Ministry of Social Affairs regarding the development of an e-card food assistance project for vulnerable Lebanese as part of the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), outlined in the sixth Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP6). While the project's concept of operations and budget are currently being finalized with the relevant stakeholders, poverty figures, targeting criteria and regional breakdowns are currently under review. WFP has conducted a training for NPTP field work coordinators on the e-card platform and on the use of the e-card.

With 273 partner shops across the country currently part of the e-card programme, WFP is seeking to further expand the number of shops available to beneficiaries. Shops that wish to participate must to meet several minimum requirements, including registration with municipality, refrigerators for fresh products, cleanness, visibility of prices, etc.



WFP/ Laure Chadraoui

APPEAL AND VERIFICATION

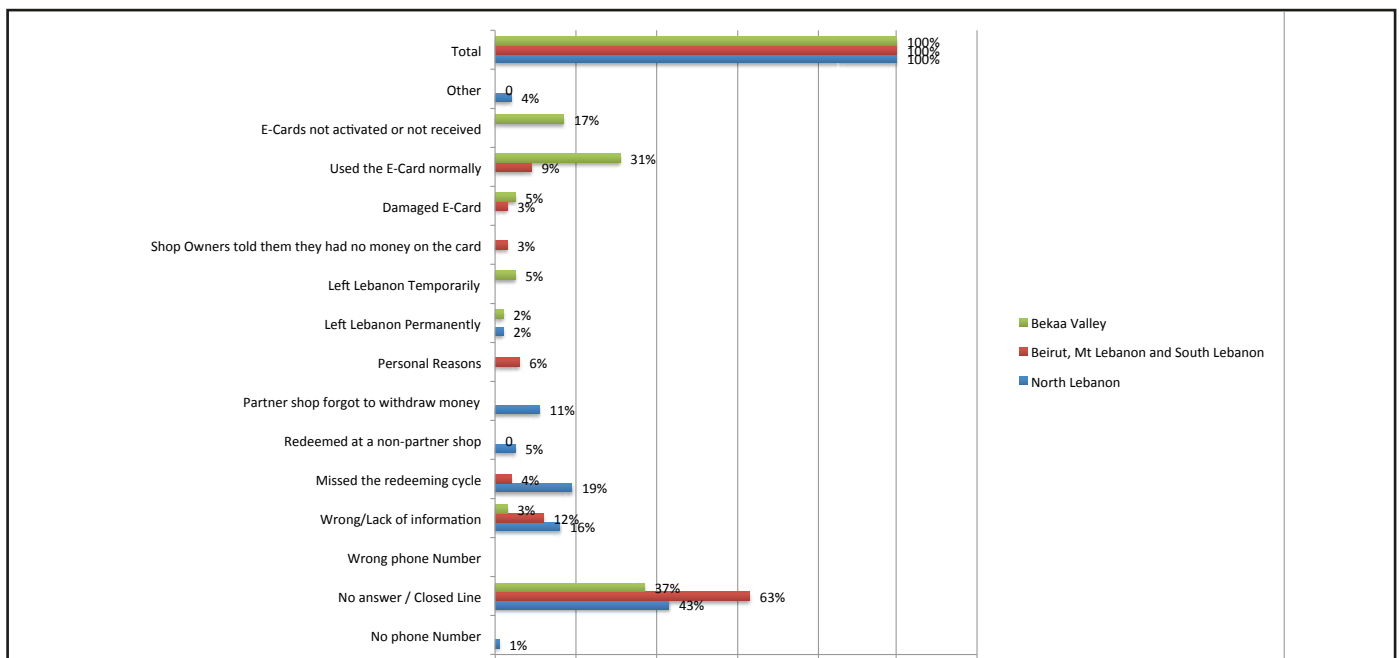


WFP/ Frederik Copper

Households recently excluded from food assistance that have appealed or who live above 500 meters (as it is assumed these households are more vulnerable), have now all been verified to assess their vulnerability and potential re-inclusion. With verification consisting of household visits to assess their socio-economic and food security status, a total of 30,966 cases were analysed and scored for re-inclusion (97.5 percent of all planned visits). Of these, 7,074 cases (22.8 percent) were scored as vulnerable and were automatically re-included for assistance. For the households that did not yet obtain their results, additional data collection or verification of information is still required, which is currently on-going.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The use of e-cards enables data on beneficiary spending to be collected, thus WFP is able to follow-up on cases redeeming between zero and 50 percent of their balance. As illustrated by the below table, results from investigation into non-redemption cases in January showed most beneficiaries to be unreachable (48 percent). Among the beneficiaries who were reached, main reasons given included lacking information necessary to redeem the e-cards (10 percent), missing the redemption cycle (12 percent) and believing they had redeemed the full amount (13 percent). WFP will continue to enhance its communication with refugees in order to make sure they fully understand the functioning of the e-cards, including the monthly automatic upload and the possibility of redemption until the 3rd of the following month. In addition, WFP is currently exploring the possibility of extending the redemption period to enable beneficiaries a longer period to redeem their e-cards.



OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 584,600
Reached in February: 544,486
 In camps: 99,850 (75% of operational plan)
 Refugees in communities: 444,636
 (97% of operational plan)

Plan for March*: 569,275
 In camps: 115,639*
 Refugees in communities: 453,636

**Planned figures are based on UNHCR manifest which is subject to some inflation due to incomplete departure information and other variables. UNHCR is currently working to address this through the ongoing reregistration process.*

Following continued unrest in several locations in southern Syria, more than 5,500 refugees crossed the border into Jordan over the reporting period. With Al Za'atri camp nearing full capacity, preparations continue for the late April opening of Azraq camp to help host the expanding numbers of refugees. Meanwhile, the transition from in-kind food to vouchers in Al Za'atri is nearing its completion, as WFP ceased regular in-kind food distributions on 13 March.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

Azraq camp

The opening of the new camp has been announced for 30 April by the Government of Jordan's Minister of Interior. In light of the current influx of refugees and Al Za'atri nearing its full capacity, WFP and partner ACTED are ready to commence its voucher assistance programme, with sufficient food stocks on hand in case of market delays. Whereas the current capacity stands at 15,000 people, the camp will be able to house up to 130,000 individuals once all shelters have been constructed.

Al Za'atri camp

Following returns to Syria, informal camp departures and the ongoing UNHCR re-registration/retina scan exercise, the number of registered refugees in the camps decreased from 133,839 to 115,639 between the second cycle of February to the first cycle of March. With a total of 24,000 individuals so far processed through the reregistration exercise, UNHCR has found that 60 percent of the re-registered population are children, while 42 percent of households are female headed.



WFP/Laure Chadraoui

Following the gradual transition from in-kind food distribution to voucher assistance since September 2013, the current distribution cycle that began on 18 March is the first voucher-only cycle to be implemented in the camp. In this cycle, WFP plans to reach 98,746 beneficiaries with a voucher value of 10JD or US\$14/cycle (20JD/person the following month), in addition to the distribution of 2kg date packages to every family following a donation by the Saudi Government as well as a date bar for every individual. Daily bread distribution to all camp residents will continue until the value of bread is incorporated into the voucher value.

More than 5,500 welcome meals were distributed to new arrivals in Za'atri camp during the reporting period, while an average of 5,000 welcome meals have been dispatched to IOM every two weeks for distribution at the new government registration centre in Rabat Sarhan, through which all newly arrived refugees that crossed informally pass before arriving at Al Za'atri camp. In addition to its monthly food and voucher distribution, WFP reached 12,603 children attending school with date bars each day, even though the recent cold weather and rain led fewer students to attend school than in previous weeks. Meanwhile, the distribution of SuperCereal Plus for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) aims to reach to reach 155 beneficiaries during March.

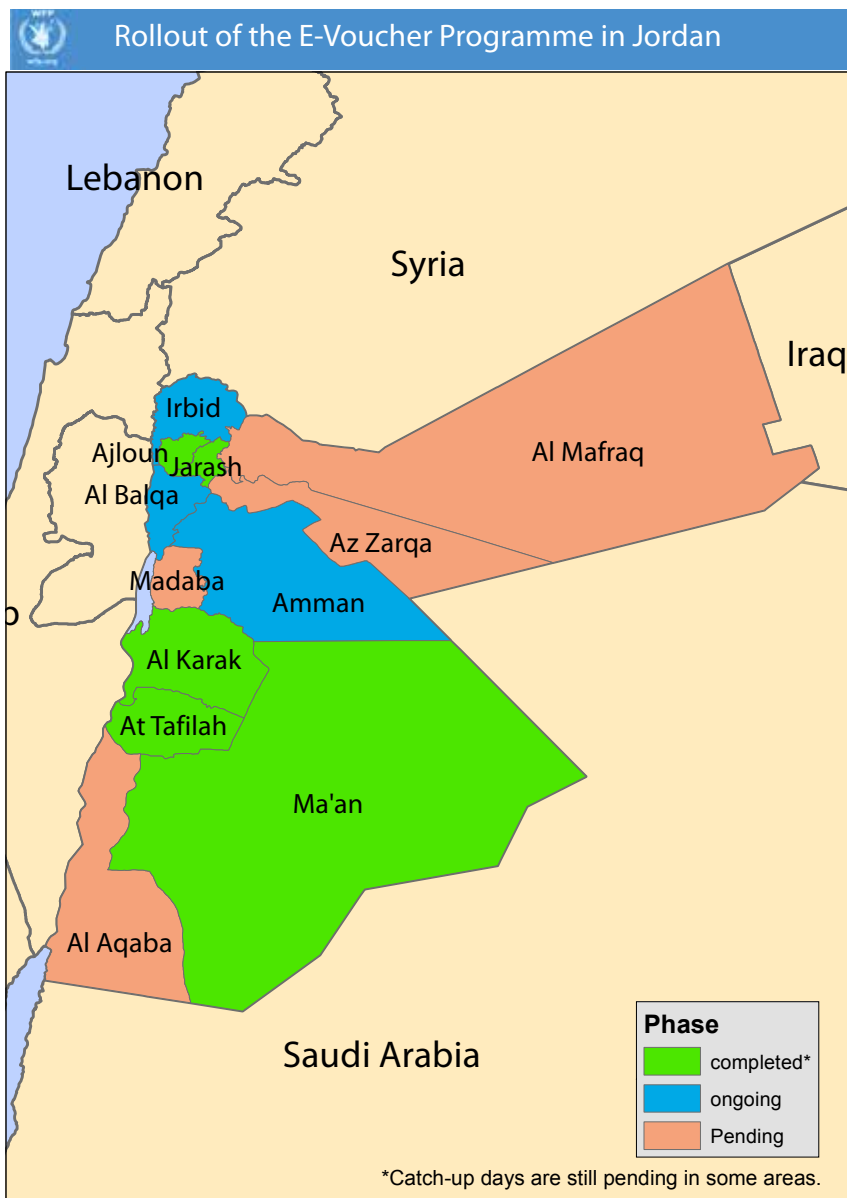
Caption: To mark the passing of three years since the start of the Syrian crisis, WFP partner Save the Children International held a vigil for the children of the camp on 13 March.

Communities

With the transition from paper vouchers to e-cards in Jordanian communities continuing, WFP has finished e-card distributions in Karak, Ma'an, Tafilah, Jerash and Ajloun governorates and are currently distributing e-cards in the more densely populated areas of Amman, Balqa and Irbid where about 64 percent of our caseload resides, with plans to reach the final set of governorates (Aqaba, Madaba, Mafraq and Zarqa) thereafter. Since the start of the e-voucher rollout two months ago, WFP has reached more than 100,000 individuals with the e-card modality.

Following the progress in rolling out the e-card programme, 372,248 beneficiaries are planned to receive paper vouchers in March, a reduction as compared to the previous month due to the ongoing e-card transition.

Throughout the reporting period, Medair continued to implement the targeted nutrition programme in community settings with daily distributions taking place through the Jordan Health Aid Society clinics in Amman, Zarqa, Mafraq, Irbid and Ramtha. WFP plans to reach 185 beneficiaries with SuperCereal Plus in March.



MONITORING

In Al Za'atri, joint WFP and Save the Children Jordan focus group discussions found food not to be a concern in the camp as a result of WFP's food assistance. In addition to noting their satisfaction with the transition to vouchers and all groups citing their preference for vouchers over food, five out of six groups noted the fair prices of the new supermarkets. Once the camp has been fully re-registered by UNHCR, the planned transition to e-cards will allow families to shop as many times as they wish throughout the month.

In Jordanian communities, monitoring activities found information sessions on the use of e-cards and PIN codes to be provided regularly for beneficiaries. Without the requirement to travel to distribution sites and pay transportation fees, beneficiaries were reported to be very pleased to receive the e-cards.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 634,900

Reached in February: 138,488 in camps
(98.9% of operational plan)

Plan for March: 140,000 people in camps

Throughout the reporting period, WFP Turkey Country Office continued implementation of the e-Food Card Programme to deliver food assistance to Syrians in 15 camps and conducted camp assessments to determine schedules for expanding the programme to reach all camp populations.

WFP has invested approximately US\$240.1 million in the Turkish economy since the beginning of the programme in October 2012; not only through the e-Food Card Programme, but also through the extensive procurement of commodities in support of global WFP operations.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In response to the primary challenge of inadequate funding which has constrained programme expansion throughout 2013, the Government of Turkey proposed to cost-share the food ration to Syrians in camps; whereby the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC)/WFP e-food card transfer would reduce from 80 to 60 Turkish liras (US\$40 to US\$30) and the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of the Government of Turkey (AFAD) would give an amount of 20 Turkish liras (US\$10), per beneficiary per month, for food purchases alone, thereby ensuring that each beneficiary will continue to receive 80 Turkish liras worth of food entitlement per month. AFAD will be uploading the 20 Turkish liras (US\$10) on its own electronic card.

WFP has continued to provide 80 Turkish liras (US\$40) per beneficiary per month, in the fourteen camps where it has been operational since last year, to give the Government sufficient time to meet programme pre-requisites for the launch of the new cost sharing modality. In February 2014, WFP piloted this new cost sharing modality in Ceylanpinar camp, whereby WFP/TRC contribute 60 Turkish liras (US\$30) and AFAD, 20 Turkish liras (US\$10) to the monthly food entitlement.

WFP has completed assessments in five camps—Midyat, Malatya, Viranşehir, Akçakale and Nusaybin—to determine their readiness to participate in the e-Food Card Programme under the new cost sharing modality. The assessments take into consideration infrastructure, prices, registration according to new AFAD mechanism, as well as, general conditions of the camp and markets to adequate standards. Based on assessment findings, TRC and WFP plan to expand to Midyat camp in April 2014. The monthly caseload will increase by approximately 3,250 beneficiaries. It is expected that as from May further expansion in Malatya, Viranşehir, Akçakale and Nusaybin will be staggered as registration, shops and delivery mechanisms are made ready to support the launch of the TRC/WFP programme.



OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 226,934

Reached in February:
102,120 (90% of the operational plan*)

Plan for March*: 108,000

**Plans are based on UNHCR manifest which is subject to some inflation due to incomplete departure information and other variables.*

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

In March, WFP continued its food assistance to all camp residing Syrian refugees in Iraq, including those in Al Obady camp in Anbar governorate. Food assistance consisted of paper vouchers in Domiz camp as well as family and individual food rations in all other Syrian refugee camps across Iraq. WFP continues to advocate for food assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees in host

communities and will participate in upcoming assessments of Syrian refugees in camp and non-camp locations across the country.

The monthly distribution of voucher assistance targeting 76,000 Syrian refugees in Domiz camp started on 2 March. With voucher distributions for the March cycle still in progress, almost 65,000 beneficiaries have so far received WFP food vouchers redeemable at three partner shops.

The Development and Modification Centre (DMC) responsible for Domiz camp management has started a camp audit to assess which refugees are living inside and outside of the camp, stamping refugee registration documents accordingly. Through this assessment process, DMC is collecting UNHCR registration cards, the main identity documents required to access food assistance. In order not to delay the scheduled distribution of assistance, refugees are able to access food assistance by providing a photocopy of their original UNHCR registration cards along with their residency permits.

The monthly distribution of in kind food to Syrian refugees residing in Gewilan, Basirma, Dara Shakran, Kawr Gosk and Qushtapa has been delayed after the delivery of food rations was held up following concerns regarding the packaging of food items. Issues with the packaging of food rations have since been resolved and delivery in Erbil is expected on 24 March.

The distribution of in-kind food to Syrian refugees in Arbat transit camp, Suleimaniyah, was conducted on 10 March. Family food rations and individual food parcels were distributed in one day to the entire camp population, reaching 2,563 beneficiaries. In addition to WFP's food parcels, 3kg of UNICEF's high energy biscuits (HEBs) were distributed to 309 families with children under five years of age, reaching 513 children.

The remaining 1,770 Syrian refugees in Al Obady camp also received food rations despite the continuing insecurity in the surrounding region. The suspension of HEB distribution in Al Obady camp schools is still in effect, while discussions regarding the commodity for school snacks are in progress with Iraqi authorities.

Assistance To Non-camp Refugees

WFP continued its discussions with Kurdistan Regional authorities regarding the provision of food assistance to vulnerable non-camp Syrian refugees. In this regard, the result from a multi-sectoral priority needs assessment (MSNA) being conducted by UNHCR and ACTED/REACH will provide useful information on priority needs in food security and on the locations of extremely vulnerable non-camp refugees. The MSNA questionnaires have been finalized by UNHCR and the assessment is expected to commence next week.

It should be noted that, according to post-distribution monitoring reports and other contacts with beneficiaries in Domiz camp, it is estimated that one third of Syrian refugees registered in Domiz camp who access food voucher programme do not reside in the camp. The recent camp audit, initiated by the DMC, will enable WFP to determine how many non-camp refugees are currently accessing WFP food assistance.

OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Registered refugees: 135,140

Reached in February: 84,966

81,385 Syrian Refugees in host communities
(92% of operational plan)

3,581 Palestinians Refugees from Syria/PRS
(80% of operational plan)

Plan for March*:

100,000 Syrian Refugees in host communities

4,500 Palestinians Refugees from Syria

* Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR and UNRWA manifest.

Approximately 3,780 new refugees were registered and 1,140 cases closed by UNHCR during the first two months of 2014. Should registrations and case closures continue at the same rate, the increase in the number of registered refugees in 2014 will be significantly lower than in 2013, which saw a total of 118,000 registrations, while case closures would be similar to current levels.

EVOLVING NEEDS AND WFP OPERATIONS

As of early 17 March, a total of 135,140 Syrians (50,056 households) have been registered as refugees with UNHCR. Nearly 90 percent of these are

residing in locations where WFP is targeting assistance.

February voucher distributions were completed on 9 March, covering a total of 85,000 beneficiaries (91 percent of the target) including 81,500 Syrian refugees and 3,500 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) with UNRWA. This included 46,000 beneficiaries in Greater Cairo, 25,000 in Alexandria and 14,000 in Damietta. March distributions are expected to start on 24 March and conclude within the first week of April, targeting approximately 100,000 Syrians and 4,500 PRS.

E-voucher Introduction in Greater Cairo

WFP is shifting from paper vouchers to e-vouchers in Greater Cairo in March, which will support half of WFP's current caseload in Egypt. The vouchers will be uploaded remotely and beneficiaries will be able to redeem them multiple times throughout the month up to the full value of the voucher at any of Carrefour's 18 outlets in greater Cairo (including five small express outlets). This will allow beneficiaries to better plan food purchases and enable regular purchases of fresh products, as well as save time and expenditure by eliminating the need to travel to distribution sites each month.

A mass information campaign is underway to advise beneficiaries on the change to e-vouchers at Carrefour, including additional community meetings, SMS messaging, posters at the distribution site and detailed leaflets on the new e-voucher process and supermarket locations.

WFP is currently in the process of developing the joint vulnerability criteria, tools and overall implementation plan in cooperation with UNHCR to enable the shift from geographic targeting to vulnerability targeting, drawing on regional expertise and lessons learned.

OneCard

The preferred service provider has been selected and the WFP/UNHCR joint experts' group currently negotiating specific contract details are expected to be finalised in April. With the piloting of the joint WFP/UNHCR "OneCard" system in Damietta planned for June, the system will provide beneficiaries with a single card that covers their food, monetary and other NFI needs through WFP and UNHCR. There is also potential for other partners to provide additional cash-based assistance through the same platform.



WFP/ Moatassem Fahim

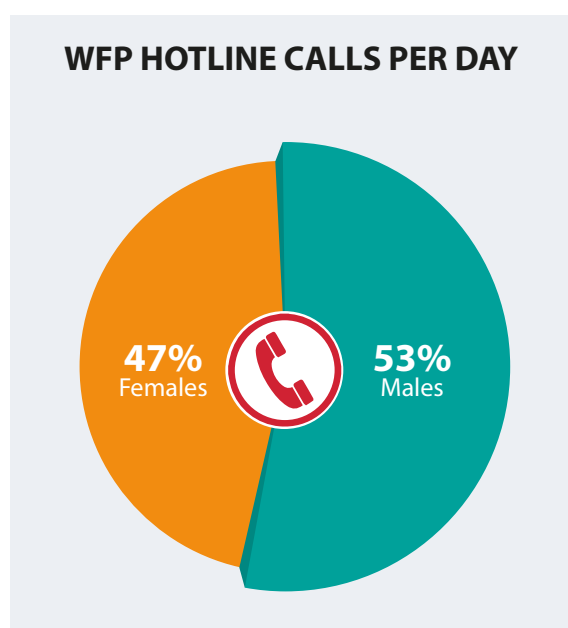
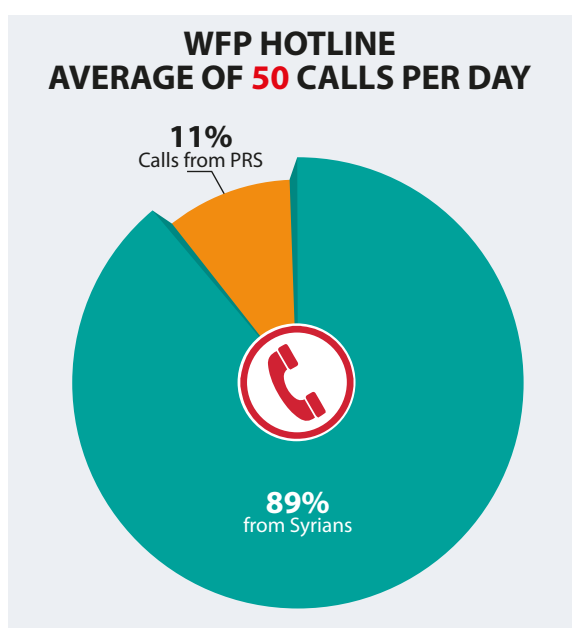
MARKETS

Consumer price indices published by the Government's statistical agency CAPMAS indicate that annual inflation rates in the food price index increased to 19.3 percent during January 2014, following a 3.7 percent increase in January, the highest monthly increase since January 2011. While inflation rates are higher in rural than urban areas, the food groups with the largest annual increase are vegetables (30.4 percent), fish and sea food (27.4 percent), dairy products and eggs (27.3 percent), as well as meat and poultry (18.3 percent). As indicated by the Egyptian Food Observatory's quarterly food security monitoring bulletin, the increase in food prices constitutes a significant threat to vulnerable households, especially in light of 65 percent of total monthly spending used to purchase food items. A slight improvement in the coping strategies adopted by vulnerable households was recorded between October and December 2013, with a decline in the reliance on severe coping strategies, such as reducing the quantity of food intake (down from 18 to 12.2 percent compared to July – September 2013) and borrowing food / money to buy food (down from 35.5 percent to 30.8 percent).

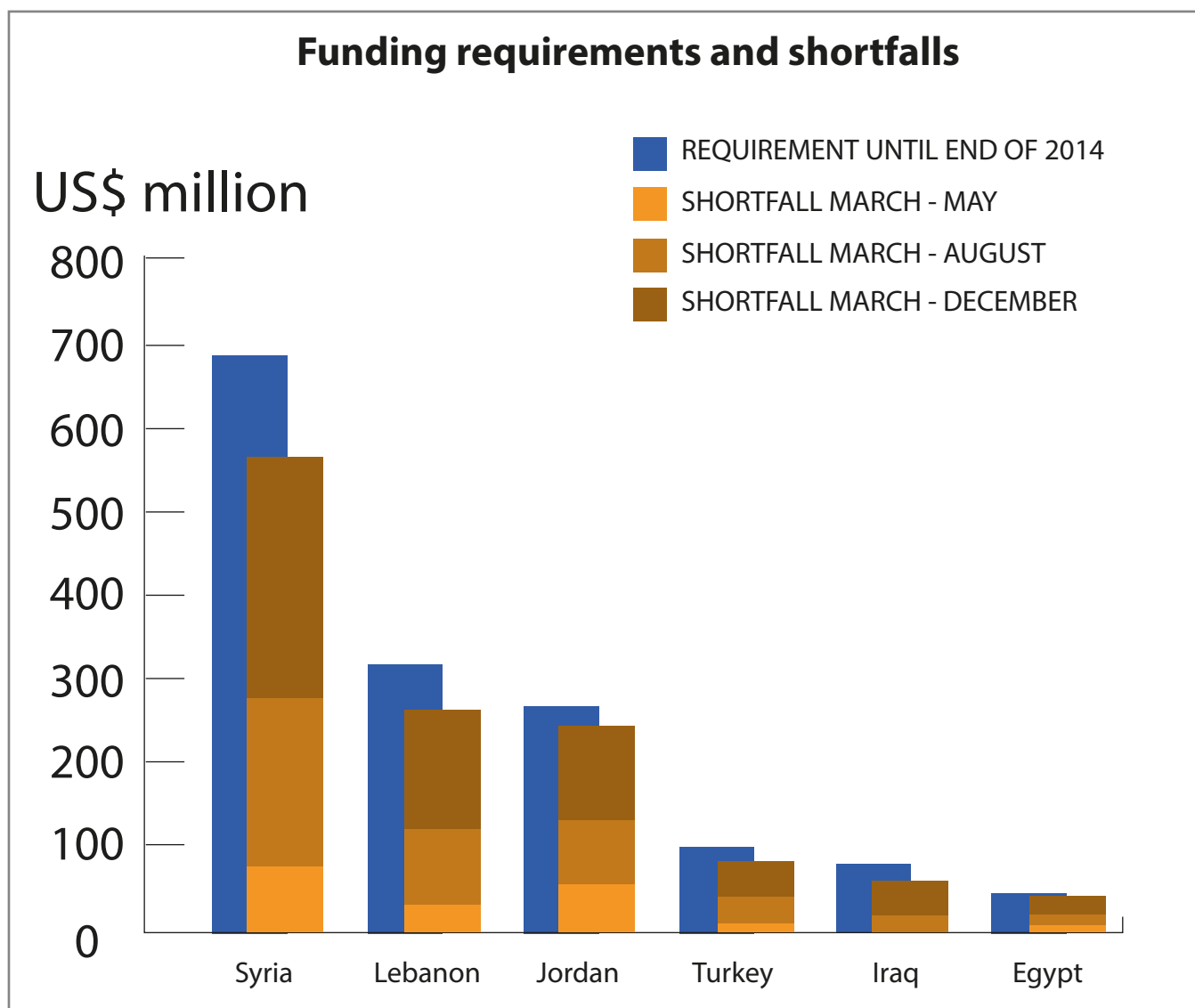
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Approximately 40 percent of the vouchers are for a family size of one person - reflecting the UNHCR system of assigning separate refugee cards for adult dependents within a household. Individual vouchers have a value of 200 Egyptian pounds (approx. US\$30) and are typically at least 50 percent of all vouchers not distributed. Particularly in greater Cairo, transportation expenditures to the supermarket and back to their residence may reduce the incentive for refugees to collect an individual voucher. This is expected to be mediated with the shift to Carrefour in greater Cairo which should lower transportation cost and time for beneficiaries with 18 outlets (with 5 extra Carrefour Express Shops) available for redeeming their voucher. This trend will be monitored through an additional beneficiary feedback mechanism during the upcoming March cycle.

WFP Hotline: The WFP hotline is currently receiving approximately 50 calls per day. There is a higher proportion of Palestinian refugees calling the hotline as they comprise between 4-5 percent of total WFP beneficiaries but account for 11 percent of total calls. This may be due to their liaison office having less capacity to respond to beneficiary inquiries in comparison to support available to Syrian refugees. While women-headed households only account for a third of refugee households, nearly half of the total number of callers are women - indicating that this format of information exchange and feedback is accessible to women.



WFP urgently requires US\$188 million to support 4.25 million people in Syria and 2.68 million people in the neighbouring countries for the next three months. Of these, US\$79 million are required to support operations in Syria, while US\$108 are required for operations in the region. In the absence of immediately forthcoming contributions, WFP's ability to provide food assistance to those in need will be severely affected. A total of US\$1.26 billion are required to support operations until the end of the year.



WFP is grateful for the critical support provided by multilateral donors in response to the Syria crisis, as well as that of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, China, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, , Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, the United States and private donors.



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