

URGENT FUNDING SHORTFALLS FORCE WFP TO CUT OPERATIONS IN SYRIA AND SUB-REGION

Since the beginning of the crisis in Syria, WFP has been called to the forefront of the humanitarian response to both vulnerable Syrians and host communities, as such, it has been recognized as a dependable, reliable and effective partner for countries hosting refugees, and for those donors who have provided extraordinary levels of support. Through our own work and that of our partners, monitoring results clearly show that the food security situation has not only stabilized, but has also improved over time for those affected populations receiving our support.

WFP has now reached a critical point in its response to reach almost 4.25 million people inside Syria and over 1.8 million vulnerable Syrians in neighboring countries. We are facing a time-critical shortfall in our regional operations from next month onwards, and in our operation inside Syria from the end of the year. Without additional donor contributions, WFP is being forced to significantly limit the number of people supported with essential food assistance and supplementary programmes, just before winter.



Aisha From Daraa Fears Going Back To Syria
 "If we stop receiving WFP food vouchers my husband will make us go back to Syria, even if the war is not over by then," 52-year-old Aisha from Daraa in Syria told us while trying to hold back her tears as she left the WFP distribution centre in Zaatari refugee camp.

REDUCTIONS IN WFP ASSISTANCE EXPECTED TO SERIOUSLY IMPACT VULNERABLE SYRIANS AND AFFECTED HOST COMMUNITIES



When 29-year-old Buthaina arrived to Lebanon along with her family (husband and 3 children) fleeing the war in Hama in Syria 3 years ago, it took them nearly three months to start receiving regular assistance. However, today and after more than three years in Lebanon, Buthaina is grateful for the assistance she is receiving. "The electronic card gives us dignity", she says. In the photo, Buthaina sits on the carpet inside her house with her 3 children.

The impact that these reductions will have is extremely serious and worrying. Firstly, they are likely to cause widespread food insecurity, even more population movement, and heighten protection concerns.

Given the size of our operation and our ability to consistently reach affected people month-by-month, WFP assistance has become the main humanitarian safety net for displaced families in Syria and for the majority of Syrian refugees in the region. To demonstrate this, it is estimated that, without WFP assistance, 85 percent of refugee families in Jordan communities will not have the necessary financial resources to meet their food needs.

Inside Syria, families will be forced to move in search of shelter, medical services,

employment, schooling and food. These are the same families who have most likely already moved several times in search of security. This continued displacement further compounds their vulnerability, hitting the elderly, the women and children, the hardest. Refugees in neighbouring countries may decide, where possible, to move from host communities into camps in search of assistance, which would add significant cost to the humanitarian response.

Any reduction will increase protection concerns, including the risk of sexual abuse, early marriage, begging and human rights violations, while parents may also be forced to send their children to seek employment, exposing them to exploitation and depriving them from education.

Neighboring countries have shown extraordinary generosity in hosting and caring for Syrian refugees. If WFP is required to scale back its support, the burden will not only be passed onto the people we can no longer assist, but also to the host countries who will face greater pressure, which may in turn force respective governments to further tighten access for the refugees. With tensions between refugees and host communities likely to be further exacerbated by ration cuts, we are extremely concerned about adding to the burden of local communities that are already buckling under this weight, particularly at a time when there is increased insecurity in the region.



Zeinab is a 32 year old Syrian refugee mother. She holds her baby daughter who's sitting in her laps and chewing a bite of bread. "We wait for the electronic cards to be loaded with money every month, by the hours," says Zeinab as she explains the importance of the cards in the family's life.

The security of WFP and partner staff, who are extremely exposed during distributions and monitoring, is of significant concern. Reducing their presence would not only negatively impact our ability to verify that our assistance is reaching those in need, but would also expose those we reach to additional protection concerns.

With the efforts of the international community to open access to all parts of Syria through the recent Security Council Resolutions, including improved cross-line and cross-border access, WFP has seen a significant increase in the amount of food delivered into Syria. It would be detrimental if we were unable to sustain the momentum at this critical time.

REQUIREMENTS

WFP urgently needs a total of US\$352 million for the operation until the end of the year: \$257 million for the region and US\$95 million for Syria.

