

SITUATION UPDATE

APRIL 2015

SYRIA CRISIS RESPONSE



For information on WFP's Syria Crisis Response in 2013 and 2014, please use the **QR Code** or access through the **link: wfp.org/syriainfo**

HIGHLIGHTS

Prolonged cuts in assistance have resulted in 1 in 5 families in Lebanon withdrawing their children from school.

In Jordan, an alarming 1 in 3 families have withdrawn their children from school.

WFP delivered enough food to support over 4 million people in Syria during the month of April, 13 percent was delivered through cross border operations from Turkey and Jordan.

Besieged civilians in Ar-Rastan in rural Homs, Syria, received WFP food for the first time in over one year.

In Lebanon and Egypt, some 125,000 beneficiaries were deemed able to support their own food security needs, and were informed that they would not receive food vouchers from May.

WFP Jordan has identified varying degrees of vulnerability amongst Syrian refugee families. As a result, assistance in the communities now follows a tiered approach whereby two different voucher values are provided to families according to their needs.

WFP/Mohammed Al Bahbahani
Iraq, Erbil

Food dispatches in April reached 95 percent of the monthly plan

Food dispatches in April reached 95 percent of the monthly plan. 809,500 family food rations for over 4 million people safely offloaded in partner warehouses in 12 of the 14 Syrian governorates.

Access in parts of the country continues to be heavily compromised by a worsening security situation. Some 600,000 civilians remain out of humanitarian reach in the north-eastern governorates of Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, where persistent insecurity and the presence of radical armed groups has prevented food deliveries since last year. In the north-western governorate of Idleb, the escalating crisis interrupted access to an estimated 350,000 civilians in Idleb city since late March and severely disrupted in-country food deliveries to most rural areas of the governorate, particularly to the government enclaves of Foah, Kefraya and Ariha. This raised concerns over the safety of some 100,000 residents, who are unable to flee these areas and are currently struggling to survive. Compounding constraints on physical access, late receipt of facilitation letters slowed down delivery of food rations to partners in Al Hasakeh. Only 26 percent of planned assistance in support of 60,000 people in Al Hasakeh was achieved in April.

WFP food enters besieged areas of Rural Damascus and Homs city to support 35,000 civilians.

Despite growing insecurity and tremendous access challenges, WFP continued to move supplies across lines of conflict and assist the worst-affected communities. Painstaking negotiations for access allowed SARC teams in Rural Damascus to deliver WFP food rations to 5,000 people in Zakya for the first time in over a year.

Elsewhere in Homs city, fighting subsided in the besieged neighborhood of Al-Wa'er, as parties to the conflict resumed truce negotiations. The pause in fighting enabled humanitarian access to move vital supplies into the area for the first time since January. Through two partners, WFP was able to deliver food to assist 30,000 people for one month. 75,000 civilians are estimated to need assistance; arrangements are underway to deliver food to support an additional 20,000 civilians in May.

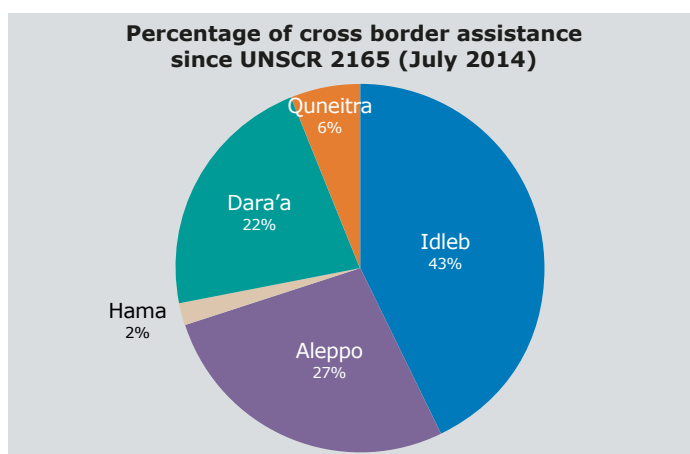
Inter-agency cross-line deliveries reach more people in cut-off locations of rural Homs

In rural Homs, an inter-agency delivery of food and other humanitarian supplies was completed by 21 April to support civilians in Ar-Rastan. 16,000 food rations alongside other humanitarian supplies were delivered over the course of three missions to assist 81,500 civilians in the area. Ar-Rastan has been under partial siege for the past two years and it was last reached by WFP in May 2014, when food assistance was provided to 33,000 people.

WFP increases assistance to conflict-affected Syrians in rural Dar'a, Quneitra, Hama, Idleb and Aleppo

WFP delivered food from southern Turkey and Jordan to support 612,250 civilians in rural parts of Idleb, Aleppo, Dar'a, Quneitra and Hama: a 38 percent increase compared to March. In response to growing food needs in these areas, cooperating partners increased their operational capacity enabling the scale-up of cross-border deliveries.

Since UNSC Resolution 2165, cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan have accomplished the transport of family food rations, assisting nearly 2.5 million beneficiaries in those areas.



The conflict continues to fuel population displacements and worsen humanitarian conditions

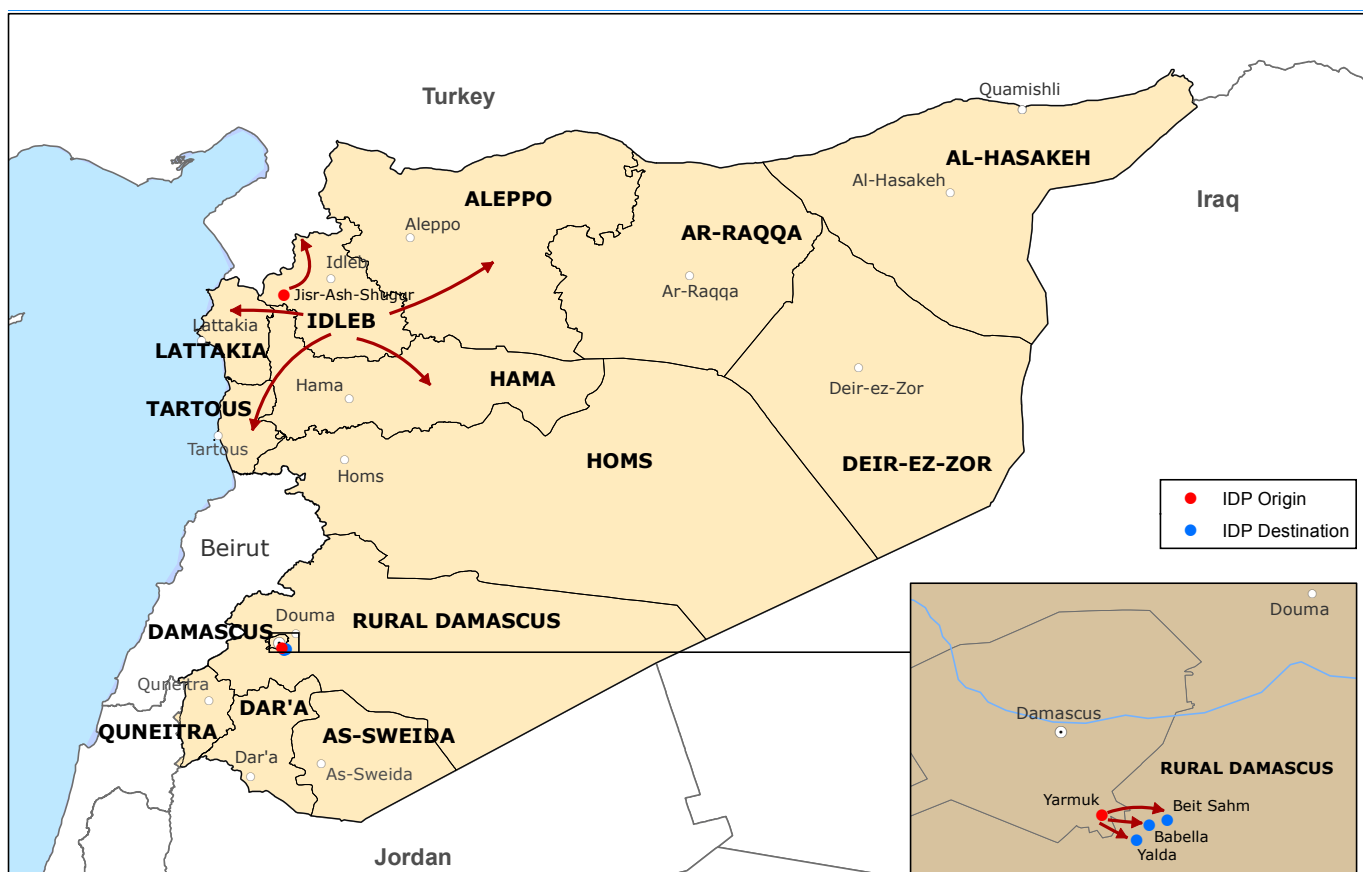
As fighting escalates in north-western and southern Syria, displacing thousands of civilians and further disrupting humanitarian access to many parts of the country, assisting isolated communities in urgent need remains a pressing concern.

Idleb crisis

After opposition groups seized control of Idleb city in March, fighting continued to escalate in the governorate and by 25 April, non-state armed groups captured Jisr-Ash-Shougour, the last remaining supply route to Idleb city and home to an estimated 85,000 civilians (residents and IDPs). The impact on civilians has been severe, as reportedly 95 percent of the resident population have been displaced to rural areas in the north-western part of the governorate, while some fled to northern Hama (5,000 civilians) and Lattakia (9,000 civilians). All internal road access has been cut off and no

deliveries to Idleb city have been possible since late March. Concerns are growing for communities trapped in the last remaining government enclaves in rural Idleb, now completely surrounded by opposition groups. WFP has continued to step up deliveries of food wherever possible. In April, food rations were delivered from Turkey to support 251,000 conflict affected civilians in rural Idleb, including the newly displaced families from Jish Ash-Shoughur. In addition, almost 7,000 new IDPs received food rations and ready-to-eat meals in Hama (Al-Ghab area) and arrangements are underway to deliver ready to eat meals in Lattakia to support up to 7,500 IDPs.

Population Displacement - April 2015



Damascus and Rural Damascus – Yarmouk, Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahem

Growing tension in the southern suburbs of Damascus city culminated in ISIL fighters seizing control of the western side of the Palestinian camp of Yarmouk at the beginning of April, with an estimated population of 18,000, including 3,500 children. Over a week of heavy fighting followed, forcing some 15,000 civilians to

abandon their homes. Families sought refuge in the surrounding areas of Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahem where they were assisted by SARC and local committees. WFP provided them with ready-to-eat food rations sufficient for 15,000 people in March, as well as supplementary feeding products (Plumpy Doz) in April to support up to 600 children between 6 and 59 months. At present, an estimated 8,000 people remain trapped inside the camp, where no delivery has been possible since the onset of the recent events.

A UN inter-agency assessment mission conducted at the end of April reported dire humanitarian conditions in the peri-urban neighbourhoods of Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahem. These suburbs south of Damascus city, border Yarmouk camp. The mission observed alarming signs of malnutrition, particularly among children. The area suffers from a complete lack of clean drinking water as most wells have been destroyed by the fighting exposing residents to the risk of waterborne diseases. Markets registered acute shortages of most basic commodities while the few supplies available are sold at prohibitive prices for most poor households. Bread is also in short supply as quantities allowed to enter these areas are rationed at the checkpoints. In addition, shortage of wheat flour and yeast as well as the destruction of most bakeries has been preventing local bread production. Following months of siege, the already critical health conditions observed among the estimated 75,000 residents are aggravated by the complete lack of specialized medical personnel and equipment. WFP and partners are arranging an urgent delivery of vital supplies to support communities in these areas.

Vulnerable women and children receive additional nutritional support

WFP continues to provide nutrition support to particularly vulnerable groups, with special nutritional needs. In July 2014, WFP launched a pioneer voucher scheme to support vulnerable and displaced pregnant and nursing mothers in Homs and Latakia. Each month, voucher coupons worth approximately US\$23 are transferred to registered women. The coupons are spendable in select retailer shops, to purchase fresh foods (such as vegetables, fruit and dairy products) not included in the WFP food basket.

Displaced by violence and with limited income, women are often forced to eat less nutritious food. The voucher programme targets women who resort to eating lower quality foods and aims to improve their access to better quality nutrition by boosting micronutrient intake and improving the dietary diversity. With an aim to support up to 15,000 women by the end of the year, the programme reached over 5,000 women registered for the scheme and over 4,800 received a voucher this month, achieving 33 percent of the plan.



In Sahnaya, a town in Rural Damascus, internally displaced families with young children at risk of malnutrition come to this mobile nutrition clinic to collect monthly rations of Plumpy'doz, a specialized nutrition product, from the World Food Programme.

Lack of funding continues to affect assistance

Despite donor generosity, funding shortfalls continued to force a reduction of assistance by 30 percent in almost all countries in the Syria region. In April, only in Jordan and Turkey assistance was provided as planned. The shortage of funding had forced WFP to accelerate the hand-over of nine of 20 camps to the Government of Turkey in February.

Regional Voucher Values: January–April 2015 (US\$)

	2014 voucher value	2015 Planned voucher *	Actual voucher values				
			January	February	March	April	May
Lebanon	30	27	Reduced to 19	Reduced to 19	Reduced to 19	Reduced to 19	Reduced to 19 for main caseload, 14 for those to be removed in June
Turkey	30**	23.2***	Reduced voucher value to 17 while maintaining full caseload in 20 camps****	As planned 23.2*** caseload maintained in 11 camps	As planned 23.2*** caseload maintained in 11 camps	As planned 23.2*** caseload maintained in 11 camps	As planned 23.2*** caseload maintained in 11 camps
Jordan	31	28.2	Reduced to 18.3 communities. All in camps receive 28.2	Reduced to 18.3 communities. All in camps receive 28.2	Reduced to 18.3 communities. All in camps receive 28.2	As planned tiered approach - 190,000 receive 28.2 and 240,000 receive 14 in communities. All in camps receive 28.2	190,000 receive reduced voucher of 21.2; The 240,000 receive planned 14. All in camps receive 28.2
Egypt	30	24.2	Reduced to 17	Reduced to 17	Reduced to 17	Reduced to 17	Reduced to 17
Iraq	31	28.2	As planned 28.2	Reduced to 19	Reduced to 19	Reduced to 19	Reduced to 19

* Harmonized Food Basket – economic options, market value and beneficiary preferences

** Complemented with US\$10 from the Government of Turkey

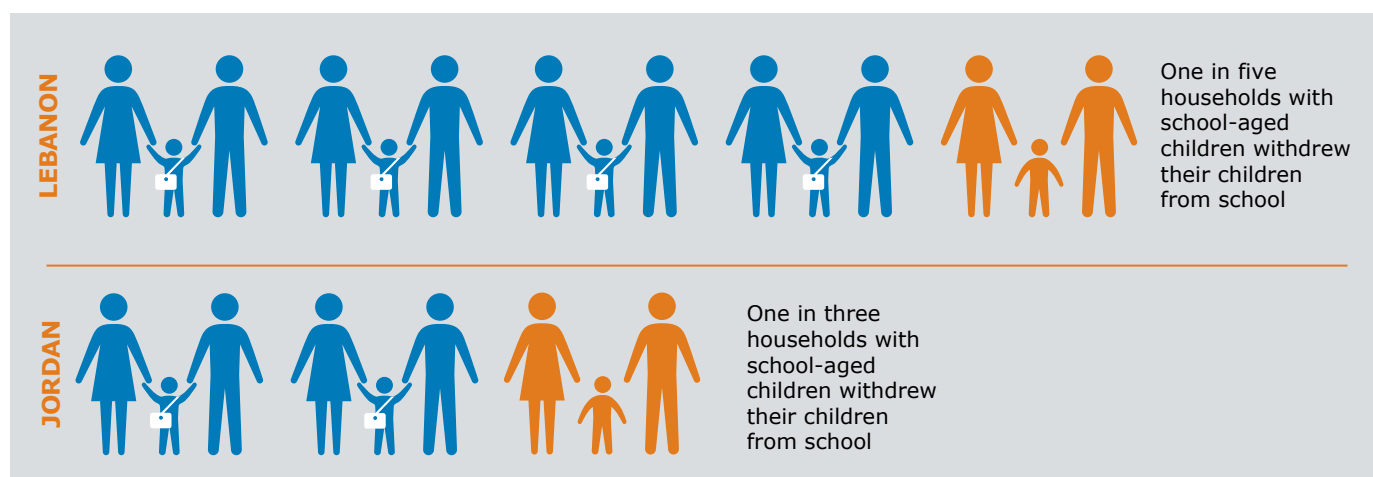
*** Complemented with US\$5.6 from the Government of Turkey

**** Government of Turkey increased their contribution to 11.8 to bring up the total voucher value to its full planned value.

Impact of prolonged cuts to assistance:

Rapid assessments and post monitoring distribution undertaken during the first quarter of 2015 in Lebanon and Jordan¹ have reflected the negative impact of the cuts to assistance. Amongst the findings, perhaps most alarming is the impact of the reductions on children under the age of 18. In Lebanon, for example, it was reported that in March one in five households with

school-aged children had withdrawn their children from school in order to cope with the reductions in food assistance. In Jordan, this proportion was reportedly even greater, with one in three households withdrawing their children from school and 13 percent sending under-aged children to work.



¹No rapid assessments were undertaken in other countries. However post distribution-monitoring data currently being analyzed begins to provide an insight.

JORDAN

April saw the introduction of targeted tiered assistance, whereby beneficiaries received vouchers of different values in accordance to their vulnerability (see table on page 5), partially as a result of the Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise² and Vulnerability Assessment Framework.

WFP Jordan's assessment looked at household vulnerabilities and food insecurity of all Syrian refugees assisted by WFP in communities. **Those able to cover their food needs without WFP assistance were deemed mildly vulnerable and therefore**

removed from assistance in April. Beneficiaries were informed ahead of time and given the option to appeal and be reconsidered. The 34,000 people removed from assistance represent 6 percent of all registered refugees residing in Jordanian communities.

In line with WFP's needs-based programming, the aim of the tiered approach is to regulate assistance according to the needs present in a responsible way so as not to remove assistance from those that need it most, whilst re-adjusting it for those less vulnerable.

LEBANON

In April, the results of the verification exercise, which cross-referenced all vouchers against registration data of beneficiaries, identified some 103,391 people who either had invalid cards or had not shown up for verification. A further 15,291 individuals were found to be able to sustain their own food needs and therefore not require WFP support.

WFP has increased communication with beneficiaries to ensure due notice is given ahead of the cuts in May. This is mainly done through a widespread SMS system to families identified through the above process (some 118,680) informing them that they will no longer receive assistance from May onwards. WFP also hosted the first communication task force with UNHCR and partners to review and strengthen tools to convey information to beneficiaries in the coming months.

Country plans were adjusted to include direct food assistance to vulnerable Lebanese. Under these new plans, **for the first time, WFP began direct support to some 27,000 vulnerable Lebanese with food vouchers** in April, under the first National Poverty Targeting Programme with Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), through which WFP provides the Government technical assistance for capacity building.

In April, WFP began assisting new arrivals with one-off food vouchers worth US\$75, instead of regular food parcels. Those deemed vulnerable, they are incorporated into the regular voucher programme.

In light of continuous security concerns, food parcels will be kept as contingency stocks to respond to unforeseen emergencies.



WFP/ Joelle EID

²Using Interagency Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF), WFP's 2014 Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise (CFSME), UNHCR registration and household visit data, World Bank models and other valid vulnerability assessments.

IRAQ

Insecurity continued to hinder WFP's access to Al Obaidi camp in Al Qa'im, Anbar governorate, where ongoing fighting in Ramadi has cut all road access to the camp. As a consequence, only existing stock was distributed which resulted in 879 families receiving half instead of full rations in Al Obaidi camp.

In line with WFP's regular verification processes, households that miss two consecutive distributions will be removed from voucher distribution list from May onwards. This will ensure better planning and more accurate beneficiary lists while saving time and costs associated with voucher printing.

As per the Government's request for WFP to focus its support to Syrian refugees residing in Iraqi camps, WFP's voucher programme has been assisting all beneficiaries

registered in Domiz camp. However, households who were living outside of Dohuk governorate, but who were registered in Domiz camp, could still travel to the camp to collect and redeem WFP vouchers. For the purpose of focusing the limited resources available to those most vulnerable, a decision was taken to exclude these households, as resources spent on transport alone deemed them self-sufficient enough to meet their food needs through their own resources.

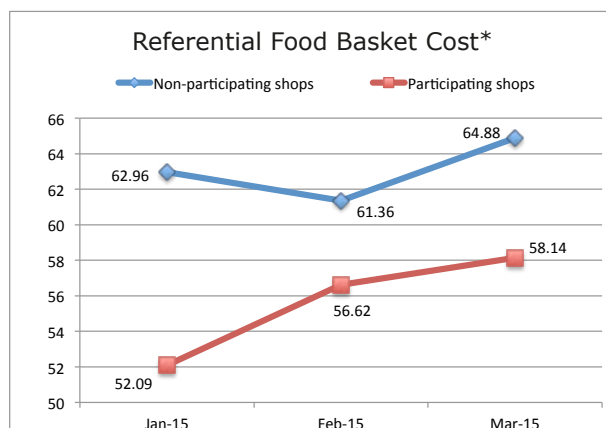
As part of the move towards vulnerability targeting, WFP and UNHCR have initiated assessing vulnerability in camps. Key informant interviews with all sector leads were conducted, while focus group discussions were held in Darashakran camp to better understand refugee perceptions of vulnerabilities within their communities.

TURKEY

In April, coordination efforts continued with local authorities to begin off-camp assistance by mid-year in four pilot areas, identified in cooperation with the Government. The plans are to gradually scale up off-camp assistance whilst maintaining current camp caseloads. In February, precipitated by funding shortfalls, WFP handed over of 9 out of 20 camps to the Government of Turkey who has maintained full support in these camps.

Findings from WFP shop monitoring and joint price monitoring committees show that the price of food items sufficient for a basic and healthy diet is lower in shops participating in the e-food card programme than non-participating shops. In addition, the price of

commodities in participating shops decreased since last month, compared to non-participating shops where the price remained the same.



*Calculated based on the price of the basic food items needed for a balanced and nutritious diet

EGYPT

The joint WFP/UNHCR vulnerability assessment is ongoing in Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta with close to 70 percent of household data collection completed. Preliminary data from this exercise will determine the removal of assistance from those deemed food secure enough to manage without WFP support in May in the Greater Cairo area (approximately 63 percent of all registered Syrian refugees). Other governorates will go through a similar process after Ramadan (end of July).

WFP continued to plan for the scale-up of e-cards to an additional 25 percent of beneficiaries in May through Fathallah supermarket chains in Alexandria and Marsa

Matrouh. This will increase the beneficiaries reached by WFP through e-cards to 85 percent of the total caseload. Discussions are underway with another retailer in Damietta governorate to shift the remaining 15 percent from paper to e-cards in the coming months.

As part of a new two-year school feeding programme primarily aimed at assisting school-going children with meals, WFP is assessing primary schools attended by a high proportion of Syrian refugee children in Alexandria and Damietta, for possible inclusion. The programme - planned to start in September 2015 - is expected to support over 90,000 students.

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION & CLUSTERS



The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated in January 2013. Since then, the Cluster has been delivering communication services for the Humanitarian community in its operational locations in Syria and surrounding countries.

Though led by WFP, it works in partnership with multiple agencies including UNDSS, UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF

Achievements

ETC is currently working to expand radio coverage in locations close to the Syrian border, offering an independent emergency communication system for humanitarian workers; this includes the expansion of the radio network in south-east Turkey in partnership with UNDSS and UNDP and establishing a new inter-agency radio room at the UN hub in Gaziantep, with plans to provide training for staff in the near future.

In Syria, ETC recently supplied equipment to the new inter-agency radio room at the UN hub in Qamishli and is providing support to maintain the operational status of the UNICEF VSAT at the Qamishli hub that provides services to other agencies at that site. Work is also underway to upgrade the radio room in Aleppo and to assist in setting up services at a new hub in Aleppo.

In Lebanon, in partnership with UNDSS and UNIFIL, ETC helped to ensure that radio network access in the north and south of the country are available to the humanitarian community. ETC also strengthened the radio network at key locations in north Lebanon. In Jordan, ETC supported cross border operations in Ramtha.

In 2014, ETC funded the positions of 31 radio operators inside Syria, programmed over 100 radio devices for the humanitarian community and deployed an ETC radio trainer on a two month mission who trained close to 200 humanitarian personnel in four operational areas on the use of radio technology aiming to mitigate security-related risks.

Challenges

The Cluster faces many restrictions on importing telecommunications equipment into Syria and faces disruption in services connectivity – Like all operations responding to the Syrian crisis, it is also facing some funding shortfalls.

However, ETC continues its work to fill gaps with available resources and to lobby against restrictions on importing communications equipment.



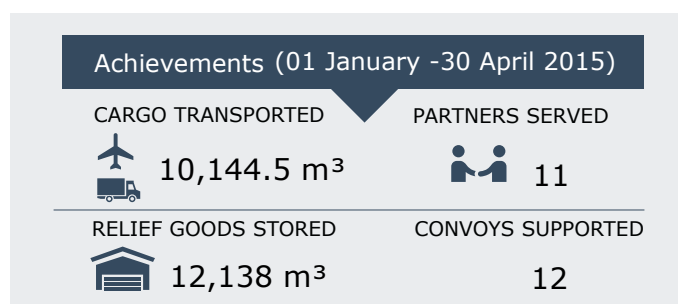
The Logistics Cluster was activated in January 2013. Since then, the Cluster has been transporting goods and storing cargo on behalf of different UN organizations and INGOs active in Syria and providing free-to-use common transport services throughout the country.

Achievements

Currently, all UN agencies' cross-border transport under Security Council Resolution 2165 receives support from the Syria Logistics Cluster through logistics coordination and/or transshipment to Syria from Turkey and Jordan.

In partnership with WFP and UNHCR, and as part of the joint UN winterization strategy for Syria early this year, the Cluster supported the provision of fuel for the Syrian population in internally displacement camps.

The cluster coordination meetings are regularly held in Damascus, Amman, Gaziantep and Beirut to discuss logistics bottlenecks and develop common solutions for improved humanitarian response. It also organizes workshops for staff members from other humanitarian organizations for logistics capacity building, such as transport and warehouse management.



Challenges

The Syria Logistics Cluster continues to operate within an often restrictive and ever-changing security environment, with varying transport routes and access to delivery points. The transport market is precarious, with transporters often refusing to go into certain hotspot areas, or increasing service rates to cover the additional risk.

The provision of adequate warehousing solutions is also challenging, as insecurity in certain areas has led to the relocation of storage facilities when required, and could expose warehouse facilities to looting and damage in those areas.

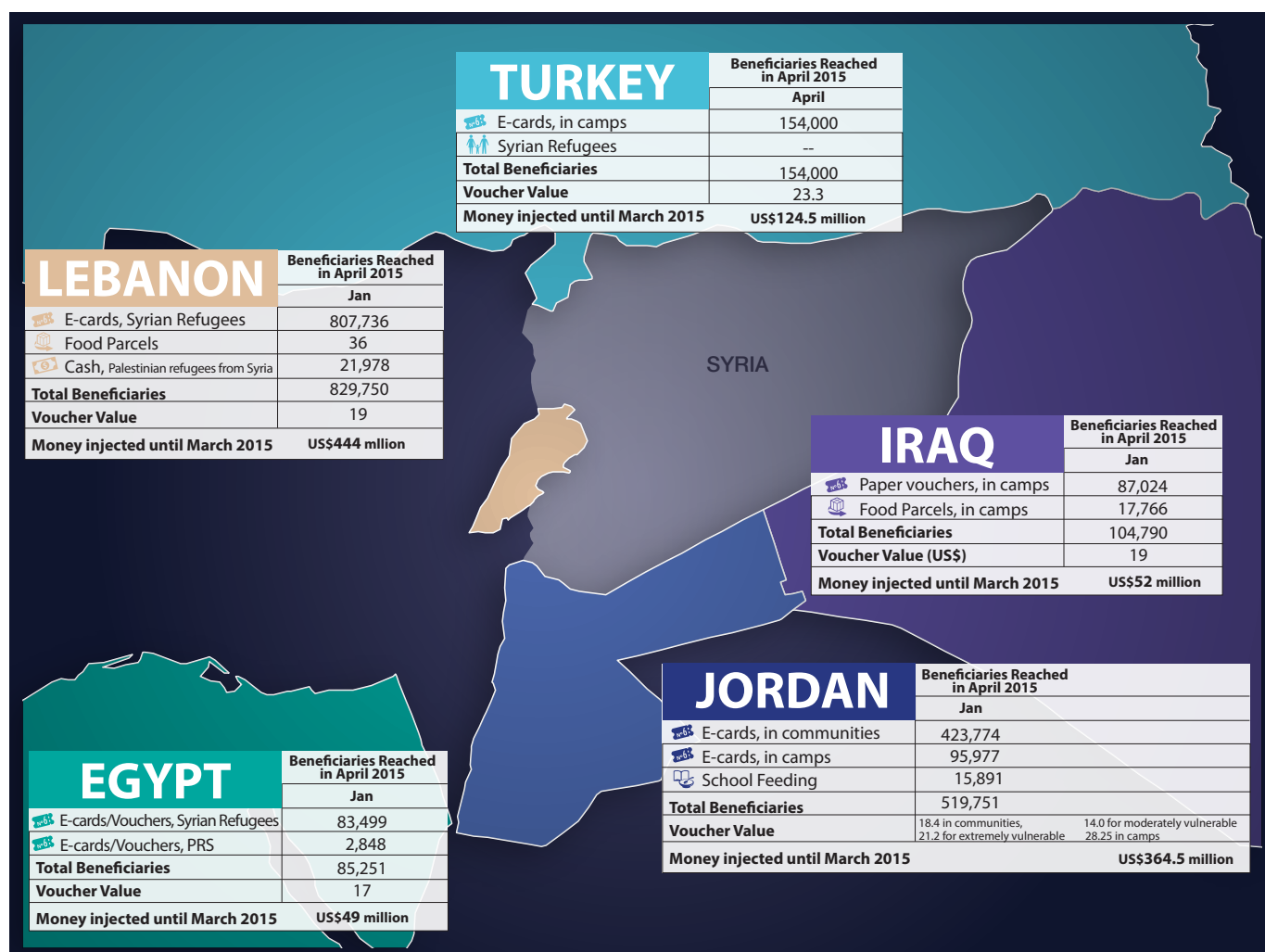
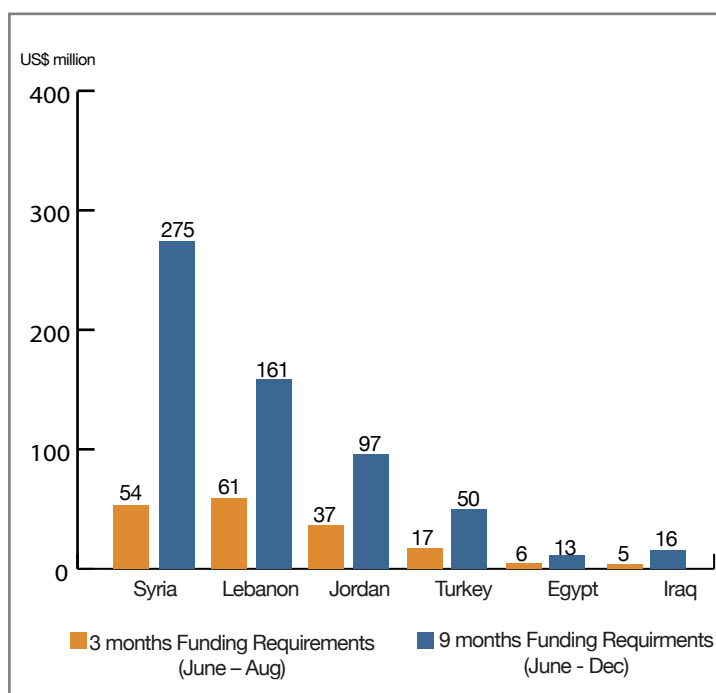
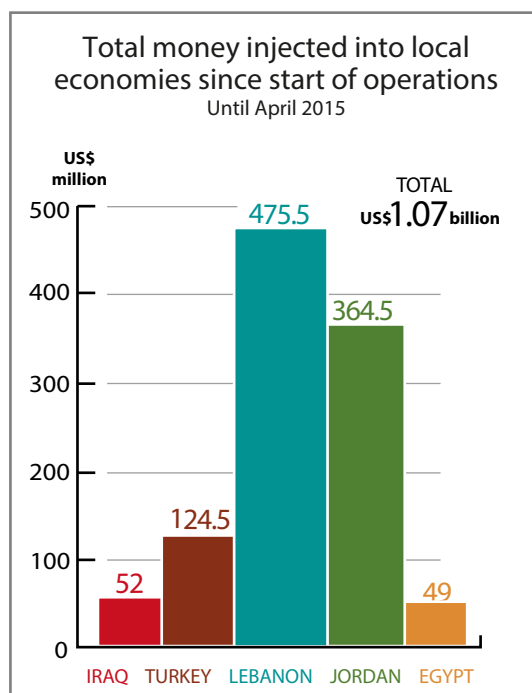
MONEY INJECTED

FUNDING

Since the start of operations, WFP's regional voucher programme has injected a total of **US\$1.07 billion** into the local economies.

To cover shortfalls for the next three months (June-Aug), WFP urgently requires **US\$180 million - US\$162 million** for the region and **US\$54 million** for Syria.

To cover shortfalls until the end of the year (June - December 2015), WFP requires **US\$612 million - US\$337 million** for the region and **US\$275 million** for Syria.



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, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States and private donors.



Donors are represented in alphabetical order.

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