

WFP
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NO to
VIOLENCE
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WOMEN



SITUATION UPDATE

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2015

SYRIA CRISIS REGIONAL RESPONSE



For information on WFP's Syria Crisis Response in 2013 - 2015, please use the **QR Code** or access through the link: wfp.org/syriainfo

HIGHLIGHTS

- WFP is expanding its relationships with food supply chain actors in the region to increase the purchasing power of vulnerable Syrian refugees and host communities whilst building the resilience of hosting countries by developing their retail sector.
- In Jordan, for the first time in retail history, a scan of the human eye will be used as a payment method instead of e-cards. This is to enhance the efficiency and accountability of WFP food delivery, bolster refugees' security over their entitlements and eliminate their wait time to receive newly-issued e-cards or replacement cards.
- Rapid assessments and ongoing monitoring confirm the vital role WFP food assistance plays in stabilizing refugees' food security in the region. Moreover, when asked prior to the steepest cuts in WFP assistance in September 2015, 46 percent of Syrians in Jordan said they would travel to Europe or back to Syria if WFP food assistance was cut.

WFP/Berna Cetin

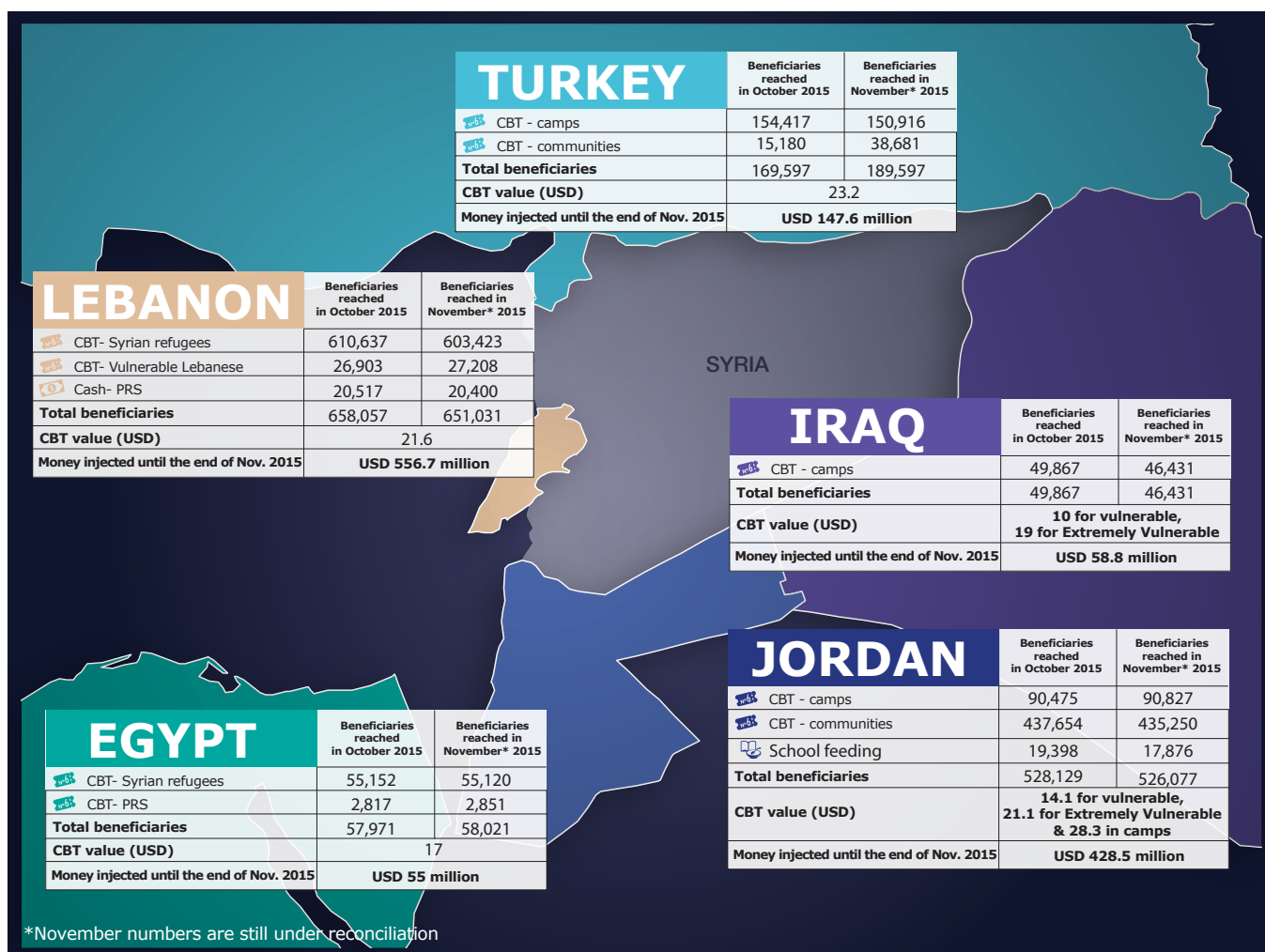


World Food Programme

wfp.org

WFP's assistance plays a critical role in meeting the food needs of Syrian refugees. Findings from its monitoring and rapid assessments confirm that families were impacted by this year's cuts in assistance. These results inform WFP's programming and how it targets food assistance. In its operations, WFP is maximizing efficiencies using innovative approaches to provide Syrian and host communities with greater benefits, dignity and independence.

WFP continues to provide critical food assistance to vulnerable families in the region, in spite of funding shortages and unpredictability. In October and November, WFP reached approximately 1.5 million beneficiaries per month.



INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

Retail Engagement Strategy

The majority of Syrians WFP assists in the region are now redeeming cash-based transfers (CBTs) through an electronic card in one of 500 contracted retail shops and supermarkets in the region. WFP has built stronger partnerships with retailers and new relationships with actors in the supply chain, fostering shared interests in improving the efficiency of their operations.

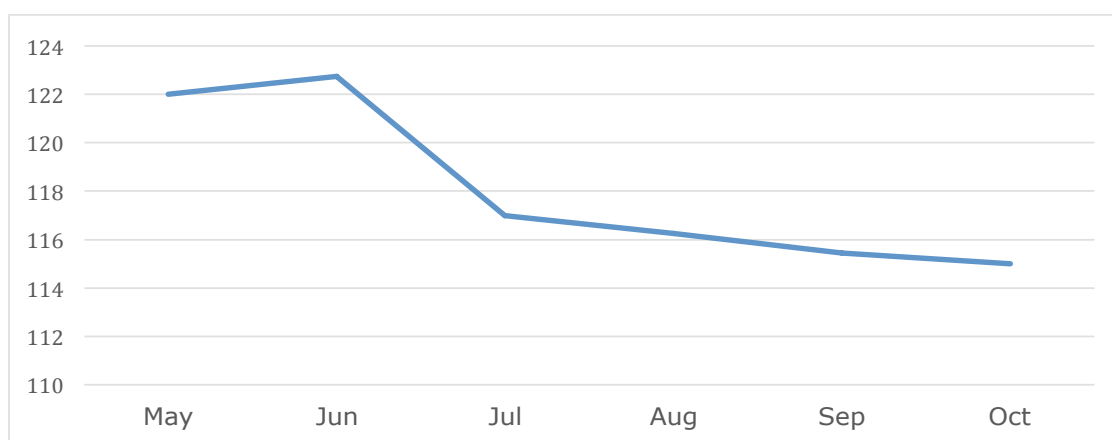
WFP works with actors across the supply chain to lower the prices of commodities. It supports retailers to lower their costs by aggregating demand to leverage economies of scale on wholesale prices. This reduces their costs, enabling them to lower their price without negatively impacting their profits. Importantly, it also enables WFP to monitor the prices that refugees and vulnerable host communities pay at the shops to ensure they are not overcharged.

Moreover, WFP has built a live feed showing beneficiary purchases in real time from one of the biggest refugee camps in the world, Za'atri Camp in Jordan, showing traceability of the specific food items being bought, the quantity and the price. This will enrich WFP's monitoring as it provides information on how

Syrian families spend their assistance and will serve to inform and refine programming interventions. The live feed will ensure transparency and accountability to WFP and its stakeholders. Retailers can also use the information to make more accurate choices of what and how much to buy, enabling them to optimize and lower operational costs, which in turn lowers prices for Syrian families and host communities.

So far, WFP has been able to work with retailers to bring down the cost of key commodities by an average of 5.6 percent in Jordan's Za'atri Camp. This is demonstrated in the below graph which shows the difference in how much a WFP assisted Syrian refugee in Za'atri Camp spent on the 39 most frequently purchased items, from JOD 122 in May 2015 compared to JOD 115 in October 2015.

Total price of the 39 most purchased commodities in JOD in Za'atri Camp over the last six months



WFP has also started looking to apply this in the communities in Jordan and Lebanon. WFP continues to explore avenues to bring prices down for its beneficiaries, to increase their purchasing power and to improve their food security. The retail engagement strategy has a positive impact not only on assisted families, but also on contracted retailers.

"We believe it is important to provide Syrian refugees with a variety of food so they can choose what they want to eat. This is important as part of Safeway's corporate social responsibility. Our relationship with WFP has supported local agriculture and strengthened local economies as many of our items are made by local farmers. WFP has also helped us to leverage economies of scale in our negotiation with local suppliers so that we can reduce our prices, without our net profit dropping."

Chief Commercial Officer, Dr. Laith A. Abu Hilal from Safeway, one WFP's contracted retailers in Za'atri Camp

Iris-Scan Payment System

For the first time in the history of the retail industry, a scan of the human eye will be used as a method of payment in WFP contracted shops. The WFP iris-scan payment system is a fast, efficient and secure method of payment that will allow Syrian families supported by WFP to purchase goods in contracted shops using a scan of their eyes. This payment system was successfully tested in Jordan's King Abdullah Park transit centre with Syrian refugees, and WFP is planning to roll out a six-month pilot of this new payment method in Jordan. This will be in collaboration with IrisGuard, Jordan Ahli Bank, Middle East Payment Systems and UNHCR.

The iris-scan payment system utilizes UNHCR's biometric data to verify beneficiaries' identities at partner shops. WFP is able to do this as a result of UNHCR's efforts to register all Syrians in Jordan using iris-scan and populate a regional iris database.

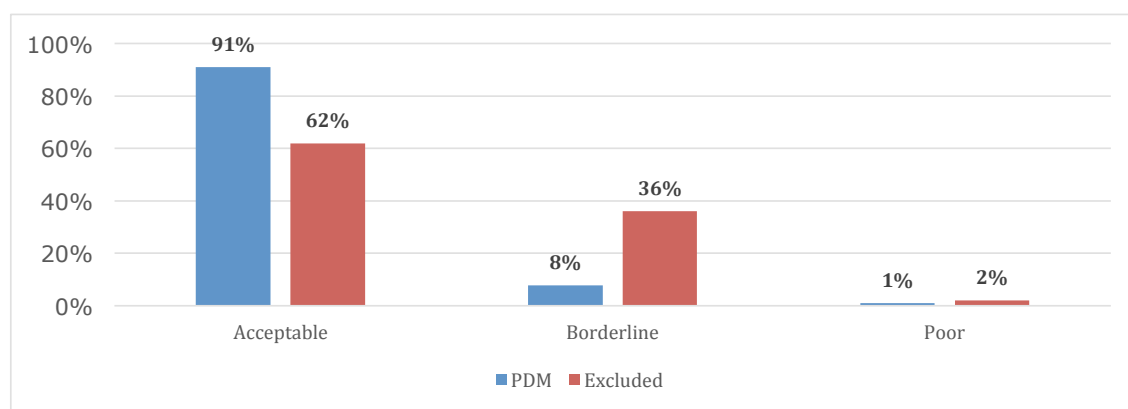
The iris-scan payment system aims to enhance the efficiency and accountability of WFP's assistance. One of the ways it does this is to reduce the possibility of fraudulent use of assistance, bolstering refugees' security

over their entitlements and minimizing the waiting time of those requesting replacement e-cards. For example, if a Syrian mother lost her e-card, she would no longer have to wait to have it replaced, but can have her identity verified by the iris-scan camera at WFP contracted shops.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF WFP ASSISTANCE

In order to better understand the role of WFP assistance for Syrian families, WFP complemented its regular monitoring exercises with rapid assessments focusing on the impact of cuts in assistance on families' food security. Results showed that Syrian families who were excluded from WFP assistance reported using more severe coping mechanisms

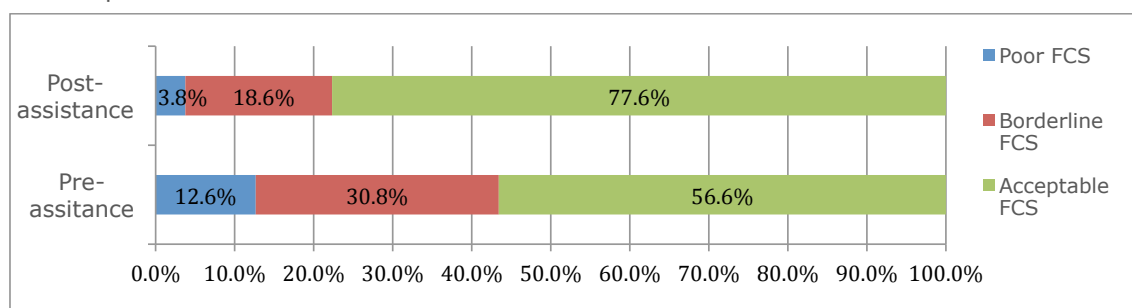
Food Consumption Score of Beneficiaries Vs Excluded Beneficiaries - Egypt



In **Egypt**, WFP conducted a rapid assessment¹ in September to monitor the impact of those excluded from its assistance.² The results indicated a significant deterioration in refugee families' food consumption score (FCS)³ with the proportion of households who had an acceptable FCS decreasing by almost one-third (see table below). The drop in FCS clearly illustrates the critical role food assistance plays in improving refugees' food security.⁴

In **Lebanon**, monitoring data collected from the first half of 2015 indicates that WFP food assistance increased food consumption levels of Syrian refugees by 20 percent, compared to when they first arrived in country. These results reflect the positive contribution WFP's intervention has had in meeting the food needs of Syrian families.

Pre and post-assistance FCS – Lebanon



In **Jordan**, WFP monitoring conducted in the first and second quarter of 2015 demonstrated an increase in individuals engaged in food consumption based coping strategies to meet household needs, e.g. reducing the number of meals consumed in a day or reducing meal portions. This was especially evident amongst female headed households.⁵ Families' savings declined in the second quarter by nearly half from the previous quarter, implying that the majority of Syrian refugees assisted have diminishing sources of income. In the absence of viable livelihood opportunities for Syrian refugees, food assistance plays a critical role in securing families' basic needs. This is echoed in WFP's Rapid Assessment conducted in October, which found that 46 percent of Syrians stated they would travel to Europe or back to Syria if WFP food assistance was cut.

¹ A total of 142 households were randomly selected and the results were compared with earlier post-distribution monitoring (PDM) findings.

² As a result of targeting and verification efforts

³ Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a composite score of dietary diversity, food frequency and the relative nutritional importance of the food consumed.

⁴ Furthermore, Syrian refugees cut from assistance had a higher coping strategy index (CSI) compared to those who received assistance (8 and 6.5 respectively). The Coping Strategy Index (CSI) is a tool that measures what people do when they cannot access enough food at the household level.

⁵ Further changes were observed between Q2 and Q1; female heads of household were more likely to adopt consumption-based coping strategies (CSI 14.1 from 12.7) than male heads of household (CSI 13.5 from 11.1).

During 2015 a significant decrease in funding to WFP's operations was observed. The steep decline in funds resulted in 229,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees in Jordan's communities being excluded from WFP assistance in September. Thanks to subsequent donations, they were re-instated by WFP in October. However, Syrian families throughout the region have and are continuing to cope with a reduced level of food assistance than that required to meet their needs, due to funding shortages. Without adequate and predictable financial support, WFP cannot provide the full amount of assistance families need.

"For the first time in my life, I took my two kids to the nearest set of traffic lights and put out my hand to strangers, begging for money," said Aisha, originally from Homs in Western Syria. Just when she thought that things could not get any worse, she received a text in April from WFP informing her that her family's assistance will be reduced to JOD10 per person per month. "At first I thought it was a joke. How can one possibly survive on JOD2.5 per week? You cannot feed a baby with that amount". Desperate, she felt she had no choice but to do the unimaginable, beg for the survival of her children. "I would have sold my soul before putting my kids in this position, but I have exhausted every possible means to feed them and protect their dignity. There simply is no other way" she sighs.



Aisha and her family in Jordan. WFP/Shada Moghraby

WFP ASSISTANCE: CURRENT STATUS & FUTURE PLANS

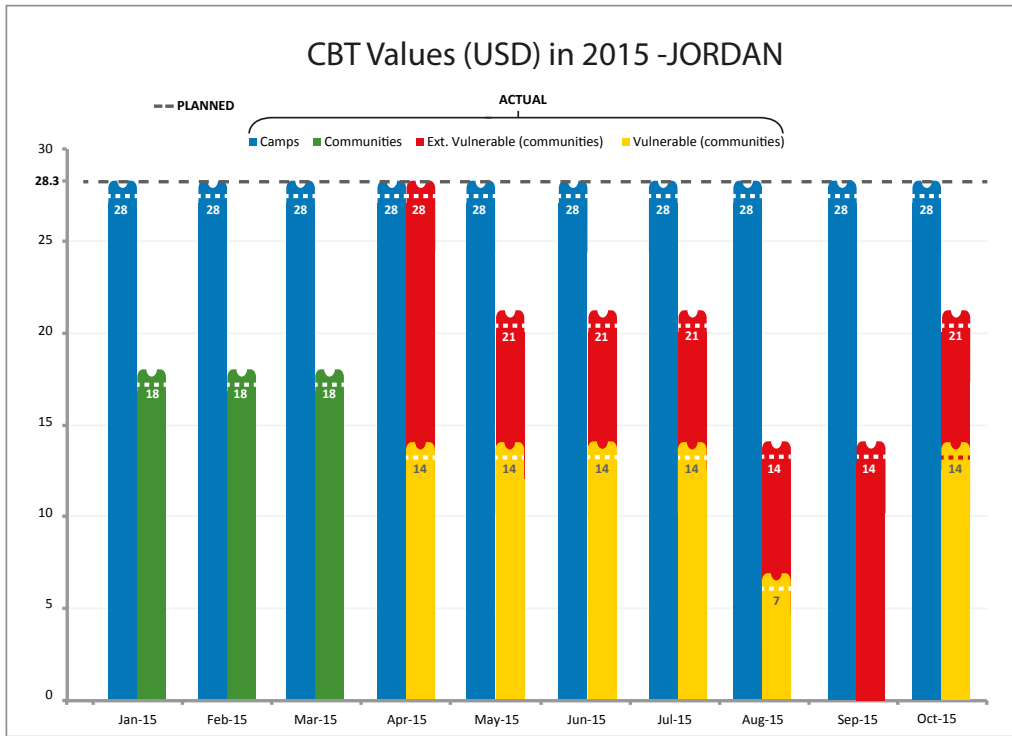
The continued generosity of WFP's donors has ensured that recent increases in assistance to vulnerable refugee families can be maintained throughout the winter. Although this assistance is not at an optimal level, it provides reasonable stability and predictability for families during the harshest time of the year.

Without a clear indication of likely funding levels for 2016, WFP chose to maintain assistance at current levels for a slightly longer period rather than to increase support to ideal levels for a shorter time period. It was judged preferable to provide a stable response for as long as possible.

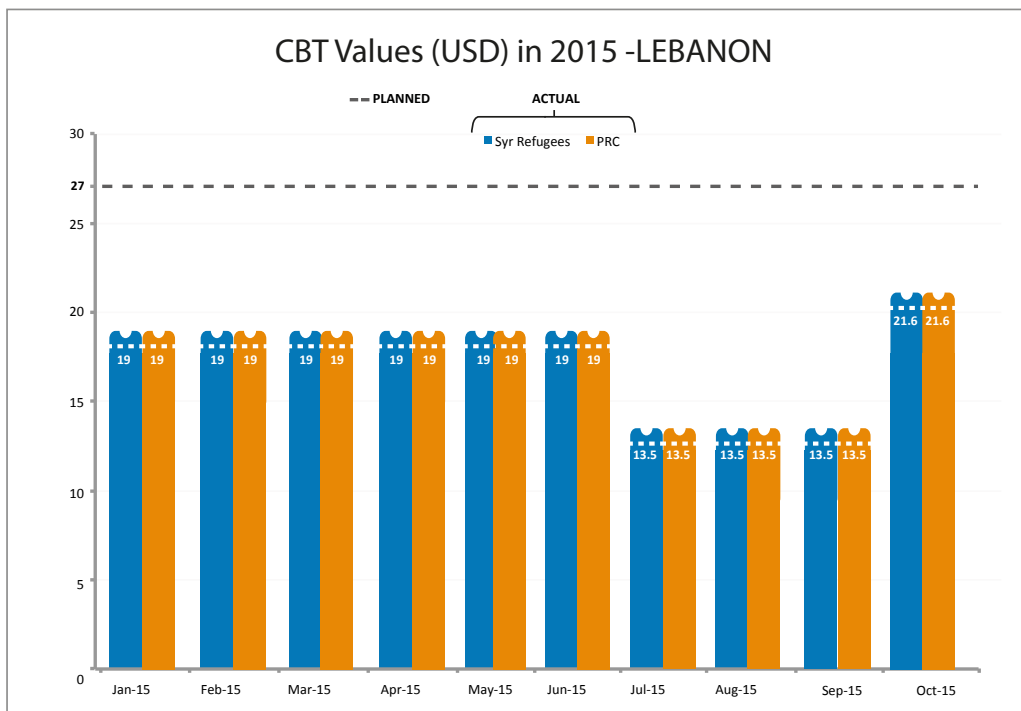
With current contributions, WFP is confident of its ability to maintain existing levels of assistance to Syrian refugees until the end of March 2016.

Looking ahead, WFP is preparing to incorporate multi-purpose cash as an additional modality of food assistance in host countries. WFP will conduct a thorough risk analysis and examine the best ways to strengthen its monitoring framework for the multi-purpose cash modality. Successful implementation will depend on both the preferences of Syrian refugees as well as donor support.

In **Jordan**, where WFP uses a tiered targeting approach (as a result of vulnerability assessments that match levels of assistance with varying levels of need), new donations enabled 229,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees who were removed from assistance in September to be re-instated at the required cash based transfer (CBT) value of USD 14 in October. At that time, the CBT value for approximately 200,000 extremely vulnerable Syrian refugees was USD 21, equal to 75 percent of the planned value (see chart) and an increase from the previous value of USD 14. In the winter months, WFP plans to maintain current assistance levels, providing 90,000 Syrian refugees in camps with USD 28 per person per month, the vulnerable with USD 14, and the extremely vulnerable with USD 21.



In **Lebanon**, WFP increased the CBT value to vulnerable refugees from 50 percent (USD 13.5) to 80 percent (at USD 21.6) of the planned value (see chart) in October due to an increased availability of funds. For the winter period, WFP will maintain this level of assistance for approximately 620,000⁶ vulnerable people. In addition to its refugee response, WFP works with the World Bank and Lebanon’s Ministry of Social Affairs to support approximately 27,000 vulnerable Lebanese people every month. In terms of winterisation assistance, UNICEF will join WFP’s e-card platform to deliver a one-off transfer value of USD 40 to targeted refugees, allowing vulnerable Syrian and Lebanese families to purchase clothing for children under the age of 15. This assistance will reach 200,000 children, approximately 125,000 of whom will also be assisted through WFP’s e-card. UNHCR will also re-join WFP’s platform to assist 3,000 Syrian refugee families during the winter season.



⁶ This includes Syrian refugees as well as over 20,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria.

In **Iraq**, WFP provides food assistance to Syrian refugees in camps. The CBT value was reduced in February 2015 from a planned value of USD 28 to USD 19 due to funding shortages. From August, WFP introduced targeting based on the inter-agency Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment, identifying vulnerable and extremely vulnerable refugees. Since August, WFP has assisted 1,500 extremely vulnerable Syrian refugees with the reduced CBT value and 50,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees with USD 10. This level of assistance will be maintained in the winter months. WFP, in coordination with protection actors, will continue to monitor the food security of refugees who receive assistance. Furthermore, WFP has identified a cooperating partner, World Vision-Kurdistan, to conduct a food security and vulnerability assessment for refugees residing in the communities. The assessment findings will inform WFP's 2016 programming in communities.

In **Turkey**, WFP provides food assistance to Syrian refugees in camps and communities. In January 2015, WFP reduced the CBT value Syrian refugees received from a planned value of USD 23 to USD 17, due to constraints in funding. Since February, WFP reduced its assistance from 20 to 11 camps, due to a lack of funding, and Syrian refugees in camps have received the full voucher value of USD 23. WFP maintained this level of assistance to over 150,000 Syrian refugees in camps, where its assistance is supplemented by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey. In July 2015, WFP began working in communities, reaching over 38,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees with a CBT value of USD 23. In December, WFP will increase its caseload to 45,000 Syrian refugees in communities and will maintain the level of assistance to Syrian refugees for the winter period. Looking ahead to 2016, WFP will scale up its caseload in communities, reaching 585,000 Syrian refugees.

In **Egypt**, the value of WFP's CBT assistance is USD 17, maintained since January 2015 at 70 percent of the planned value of USD 24. This is due to protracted funding cuts, which forced WFP to reduce its assistance. WFP will continue to maintain its assistance to a planned targeted caseload of approximately 60,000⁷ refugees for the winter months.

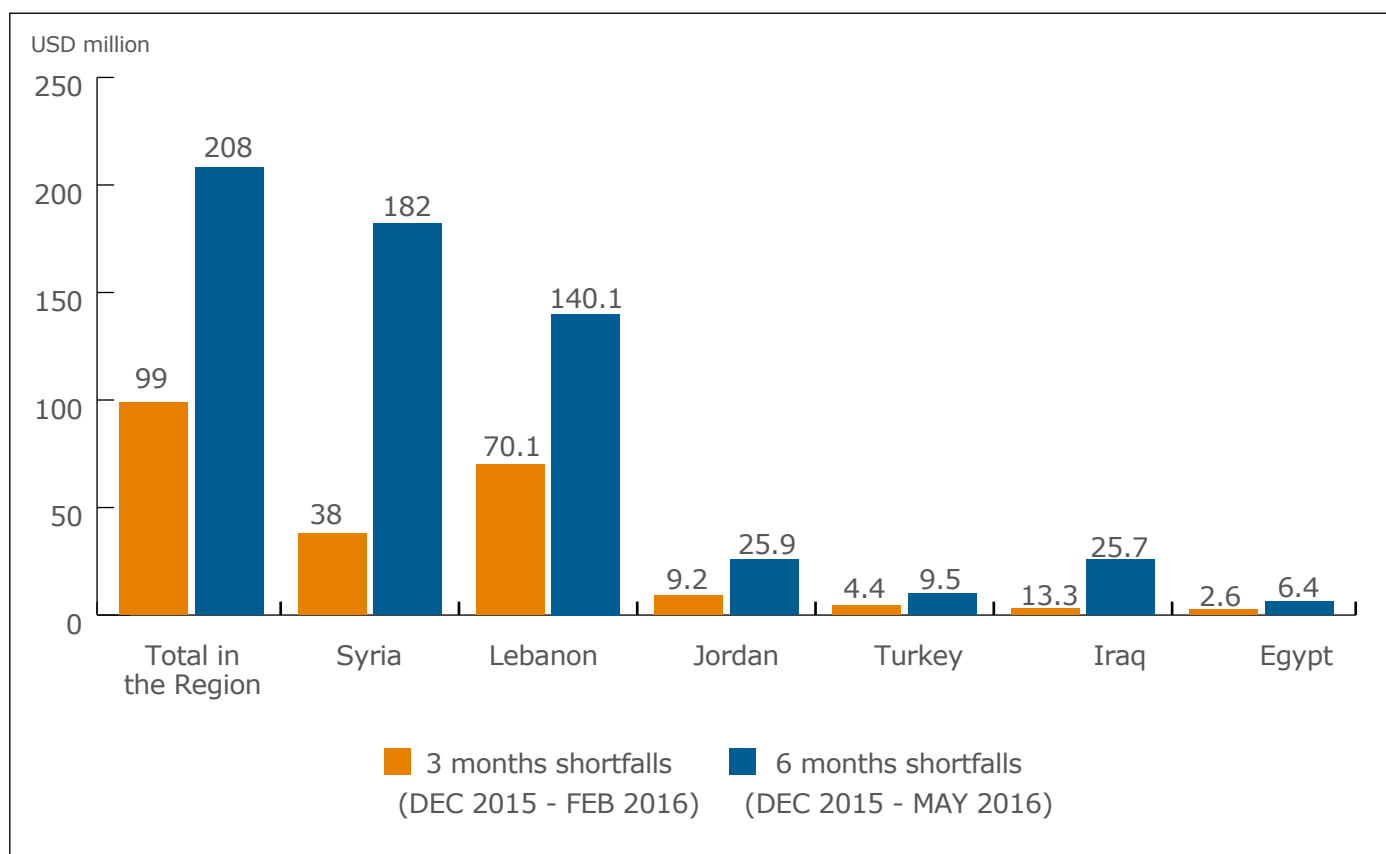
Inside **Syria**, WFP reached approximately 4 million Syrians with food assistance each month during 2015. This was done through a combination of regular food deliveries, cross-line convoys and cross-border deliveries. However, shortfalls - coupled with late funding - have forced WFP to reduce the value of the food basket from the planned amount of 1646 kilocalories (kcal) per person per day by an average of 22 percent per month since January 2015. In October, the food basket was reduced to 76 percent of the planned kilocalorie amount and in November, it was at 77 percent. The planned amount will be further reduced to 68 percent in December.



⁷ This includes Syrian refugees as well as approximately 3,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS (in USD million)

WFP net funding requirements for Syria operation for the next three months (December 2015-February 2016) stands at **USD 137 million; USD 38 million for inside Syria** and **USD 99 million in the region**. For the next six months (December 2015– May 2016), WFP requires **USD 390 million; USD 182 million for inside Syria** and **USD 208 million in the region**.



* January to April requirements are aligned to December 2015 needs and pending revised 2016 project plan requirements

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.

For further information contact:
syriacrisis.info@wfp.org

Rebecca Richards,
 Head of the Amman Support Office
 Mobile: +962 (0) 798947954 or
 E-Mail: rebecca.richards@wfp.org