

INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL RESPONSE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey

10 - 23 October 2013



This update provides a snapshot of the inter-agency regional humanitarian response in full coordination with host Governments and 126 partners across the region. Published weekly on Thursday, the next update will be available on 31 October 2013.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- With winter fast approaching and reports suggesting that the season may be very severe, Regional Response Plan (RRP) partners are coordinating to prepare, implement and monitor a winterization plan targeting those refugees most at risk from dropping temperatures. These include families in tents or makeshift accommodation, families living in sub-standard accommodation, refugees in areas with the harshest climate and the most socioeconomically vulnerable refugees.
- In partnership with MasterCard, WFP is rolling out an innovative electronic voucher programme in Lebanon that should allow hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees to meet their food needs and help boost the local economy. Plans are underway to expand the programme to Jordan over the coming year.
- Growing numbers of Syrians are crossing the Mediterranean from Egypt to Italy, citing increasing anxiety over their security as well as incidents of physical assault, verbal threat and detention. The Egyptian Government estimates that 250,000 to 300,000 Syrians currently reside in Egypt. Between August and September, 6,233 Syrians and Palestinians arrived along the coast of Italy. Most of the Syrian refugees that reach Italy continue on to other countries in Europe to seek asylum.

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REGIONAL FIGURES

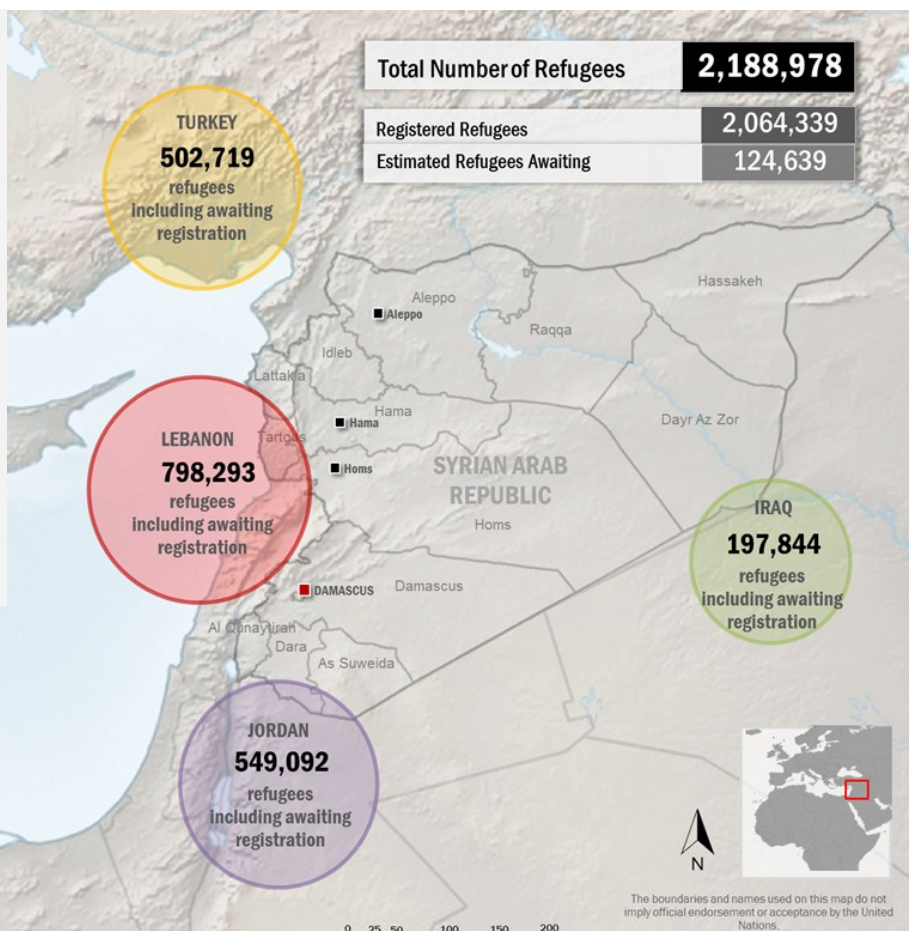
2.1 million refugees fleeing Syria have sought protection in neighbouring countries

7 out of 10 Syrian refugee children are not attending school in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey*

1.1 million refugees are receiving food aid in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey*

US\$ 1.58 billion funding gap in the Syria Regional Response Plan

* UNICEF, WFP



Refugee population as of 24 October 2013, based on available data. For updated figures, please visit <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees>

WFP transitions to E-Cards in Lebanon

- WFP began its roll-out of electronic pre-paid vouchers, known as 'e-cards', this month with the technical support of MasterCard. The e-cards aim to reach around 800,000 Syrian refugees in the country by the end of the year. In line with WFP's prioritization of assistance to the most vulnerable, this figure represents almost 80 per cent of UNHCR's predicted Syrian refugee population in Lebanon by the end of the year.
- Participating families will receive e-cards that will be loaded each month with US\$27 per person (equivalent to paper vouchers). The e-cards can be redeemed to purchase a list of items in local shops, allowing people to buy food that meets their needs, including fresh produce. As with paper vouchers, nearly 300 stores across Lebanon will be participating in the e-card programme. With the transition to e-cards, credit will be automatically transferred to the cards, allowing people to receive food assistance without attending large-scale monthly distributions. WFP Lebanon has previously delayed paper voucher distributions due to security concerns. E-cards will allow continued assistance to refugees while ensuring the safety of beneficiaries, as well as WFP and partner staff.
- The roll-out of the e-card to over 26,000 beneficiaries in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon has been welcomed by shop owners and Syrian refugees. Prior to the transition, WFP informed beneficiaries of the upcoming transition through information brochures and posters at distribution sites and shops. In addition, WFP provided training for partners and merchants in order to ensure a smooth transition. Minor issues were reported during the transition that were related to beneficiaries receiving cards that were not activated, merchant accounts that could not be used and cards that were not collected by beneficiaries. All reported issues have been resolved.
- At some distribution sites, parallel distributions of WFP e-cards and paper vouchers, as well as non-food items by other organizations, resulted in long queues and increased waiting periods. However, it is anticipated that after the completion of the e-card transition, the frequency at which beneficiaries will need to visit distribution sites will decrease significantly, minimizing their transportation time and costs. Furthermore, reports from the bank will allow for closer monitoring of the consumption patterns and preferences of Syrian families. Such reports will also provide an overview of the shop locations at which transactions are occurring, and will allow WFP to track any unused balances, providing a geographical overview of the shopping and spending behaviour of beneficiaries.
- From January to September 2013, WFP injected more than US\$83 million into the Lebanese economy. In September over US\$15 million, and in October so far over US\$7.6 million have been spent in local shops in Lebanon through WFP's voucher programme.



E-card in use to make purchases from a local store. WFP | L. Chadraouill

The World Bank presents its Four-Track Strategy to help Lebanon address the impact of the Syria crisis and refugee influx in Washington D.C.

- Following up on its Economic and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) study on Lebanon presented last month in New York and repeated calls from the humanitarian community for increased solidarity with countries hosting Syrian refugees, the World Bank (WB) outlined its Four-Track Approach to help Lebanon during this year's Annual Meetings with the International Monetary Fund in Washington D.C. in the presence of the Lebanese Ministers of Finance and Economy.
- Based on the WB's previous recommendations to mitigate the impact of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon, the roadmap, which also looks at financing options, is made up of the following: (1) a first track centered on existing projects which can have an immediate impact on communities affected by the crisis; (2) a second track focusing on mid-size projects needing longer preparation; (3) a third track including projects with sustained development potential; and (4) a fourth track enhancing private-sector engagement in the Lebanese market for the delivery of services such as energy, electricity, water and transport.

Initiatives to promote social cohesion between refugee and host communities

- Initiatives that benefit both refugees and the host population can prevent tension and foster tolerance between refugee and local communities. Relieving social tension by addressing joint needs in the community is of particular importance in Lebanon and Egypt, where all Syrian refugees are living in non-camp settings and scattered in urban areas in host communities.
- Lebanon - Social cohesion projects are ongoing nationwide. This week, UNHCR and Right to Play launched a basketball workshop targeting 60 Lebanese and refugee youth incorporating training on positive communication skills and tolerance. Trained youth will then relay acquired skills to over 1,200 Lebanese and Syrian children aged 8-17 through similar workshops to be provided by the end of the year.

Additionally, local authorities including mayors, mukhtars and other leaders from both refugee and hosting communities across eleven severely affected areas are participating in training on conflict mediation. These leaders are forming committees aimed to address emerging community tensions and respond to conflicts.

Refugee volunteers continue to play an essential role in reaching out to their communities and reporting back to UNHCR on pressing protection concerns that require action. There are currently 106 refugees nationwide volunteering under this project. UNHCR is working on further developing this project; in 2014, there should be one refugee volunteer for each group of 1,500 Syrian refugees.

- Egypt - In view of the deteriorating protection environment for Syrian refugees in Egypt, UNHCR is looking at developing 15-20 Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in collaboration with Egyptian municipalities in refugee-affected areas, refugee communities and local/international NGO partners, between October and December 2013. Aimed at addressing the existing lack of services in deprived host communities, QIPs are ultimately intended to improve the image of refugees and reduce tensions between them and the host community, with the goal of improving the protection environment for Syrian refugees in Egypt. UNHCR has launched an invitation for QIP proposals to its partners and held a meeting with the host and refugee community in a particularly deprived neighbourhood in Greater Cairo, which resulted in the development of a number of potential QIP proposals.

UNFPA: prevention and response to gender-based violence

- Lebanon - UNFPA in collaboration with the American University of Beirut's Department of Psychology, conducted a two-day training course on problem-solving skills for 14 social workers and psychologists from the Ministry of Social Affairs and local NGOs.
- Jordan - The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in collaboration with UNFPA conducted a training course on GBV basic principles, risk identification and the referral pathway for 26 professionals working in the community-based child protection committees in Za'atri camp, supported by Save the Children.

- Iraq - UNFPA organized four focus group discussions on gender-based violence, targeting women, men, boys and girls on their safety and security issues, including gender-based violence and gender-based needs and concerns. A total of 44 women, men, boys and girls participated. The results of the focus group discussions will inform the community outreach activities as well as advocacy initiatives among other sectors on women's gender needs and concerns. UNFPA conducted two lectures in the women's space targeting women, with 29 women attending the reproductive health session and 16 attending a behaviour modification session.
- Turkey - During the first two weeks of October, UNFPA conducted eight training courses for around 100 camp security personnel, translators, teachers and Syrian volunteer teachers on communication skills related to assessment and referral of violence-affected people. UNFPA provided Syrian refugees and representatives of women committees information about the effects of violence, coping skills and its impact on health.



A mother with one of her four young children in Akcakale camp, Turkey.
UNHCR/A. Branthwaite

Refugee Voices: Save the Children Jordan's Infant and Young Child Feeding Program

- **Jordan** - Save the Children's Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Program has been running in Za'atri camp since December 2012. The program provides assistance to children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women.
- Breastfeeding in an emergency protects children from an increased risk of infection and malnourishment. With the right support and assistance, mothers can continue to breastfeed. In such contexts, access to hygienic facilities to sterilize bottles and prepare infant formula, appropriate and timely health services, safe storage of water and privacy to breastfeed can be limited, potentially impacting on the nutritional status of infants.
- The IYCF Program has set up three caravans in the camp, which provide a safe and private place for mothers to breastfeed their children. Women who come to the caravan are provided with biscuits and water, and both mothers and fathers are given awareness-raising sessions on breastfeeding by Save the Children's specialists.
- Halima, now a mother of five children, is participating in the programme. She arrived in Za'atri camp five months ago, after fleeing from Syria with her husband and four children. When Halima arrived in Za'atri she was seven months pregnant. An IYCF counselor visited Halima before she was due to give birth to introduce her to the concept and importance of exclusive breastfeeding and encourage her to initiate breast feeding within the first hour after birth. According to Halima, "When she visited me after I gave birth, I explained how I began breastfeeding immediately after delivery but that I was having difficulties with the correct positioning and attachment. The counsellor demonstrated the correct method of holding my baby and clarified a few things I was confused about in regard to times and duration of breastfeeding sessions. The counsellor followed up with me every week to ensure that I didn't face any other difficulties. I have learned things from the counselor and the awareness sessions given at the caravan that I did not even know from my past experience with my four older children."



Halima and her family live in a small one-room caravan. Here, their daughter Wafa, six years old, poses next to one of her neighbours' tents in Za'atri. Save the Children Jordan

The regional response for refugees fleeing Syria is the coordinated effort of 126 participating organizations, including 84 appealing:

ActionAid | [Action Contre la Faim](#) | Adventist Development and Relief Agency | [Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development](#) | The Lebanese Association for Development | [Lebanese Association for Human Promotion & Literacy](#) | Amel Association | [ARRD – Legal Aid](#) | Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale | [CARE International](#) | Caritas | [Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre](#) | Catholic Relief Services | [Centre for Victims of Torture](#) | Cooperative Housing Foundation International | [Children without Borders](#) | Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli | [Danish Refugee Council](#) | Finn Church Aid/Act Alliance | [FAO](#) | Fundacion Promocion Social de la Cultura | [GVC/Muslim Aid](#) | Handicap International | [Heartland Alliance International](#) | Institute for Family Health/Noor Al Hussein Foundation | [International Catholic Migration Commission](#) | International Medical Corps | [IOM](#) | International Orthodox Christian Charities | [International Relief and Development](#) | International Rescue Committee | [INTERSOS](#) | Islamic Relief Worldwide | [JEN](#) | Jesuit Refugee Service | [Jordan Health Aid Society](#) | LDS Charities | [Lebanese Red Cross](#) | Lutheran World Federation | [Madrasati Initiative](#) | Medair | [Médecins du Monde](#) | Mercy Corps | [Movement for Peace](#) | Nippon International Cooperation for Community Development | [Norwegian Refugee Council](#) | Operation Mercy | [Oxfam GB](#) | Première Urgence – Aide Médicale Internationale | [Qatar Red Crescent](#) | Questscope | [Refugee Education Trust](#) | Relief International | [Restart](#) | Rene Mouawad Foundation | [Royal Health Awareness Society](#) | Safadi Foundation | [Save the Children International](#) | Save the Children Jordan | [Social Humanitarian Economical Intervention for Local Development](#) | Solidarités International | [Terre des Hommes](#) | Terre des Hommes Italia | [Terre des Hommes Lausanne](#) | German Federal Agency for Technical Relief | [Un ponte per](#) | UNDP | [UNESCO](#) | UNFPA | [UN-Habitat](#) | UNHCR | [UNICEF](#) | UNODC | [UNOPS](#) | UNRWA | [UN Women](#) | War Child Holland | [WFP](#) | WHO | [World Rehabilitation Fund](#) | World Vision | [YMCA](#) |

Humanitarian response partners are invited to contribute to this report. For more information or to be added to the distribution list, please contact [Anna King](#), UNHCR Regional Reporting Officer | kinga@unhcr.org