



WFP Syria Situation Report #3

March 2020



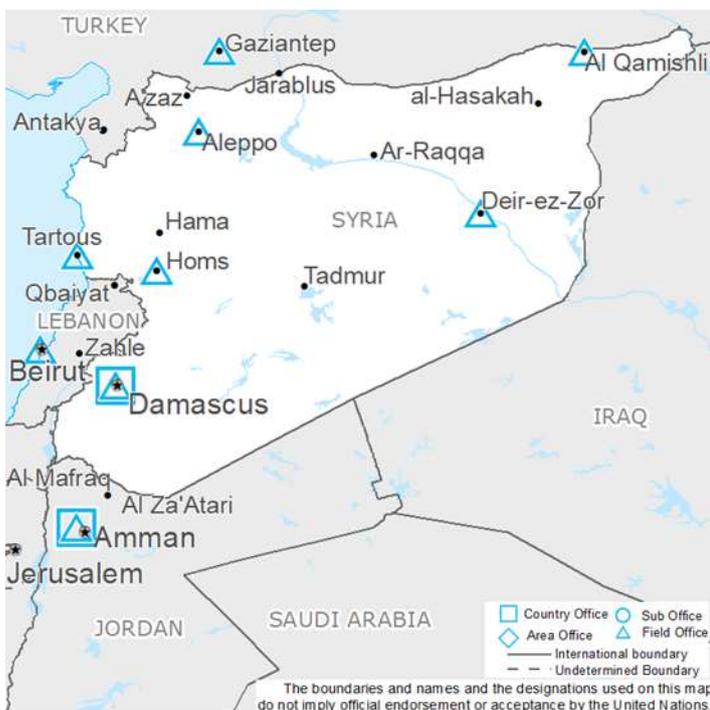
4.7 million people assisted

March 2020 (based on dispatches)



WFP Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP)

2020 Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)	Overall: Not available yet
	WFP share: USD 985 million
WFP Net Funding Requirement (April 2020 – September 2020) WFP Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP)	USD 238 million



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Further information: www1.wfp.org/countries/syrian-arab-republic

In Numbers

11.1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance

6.1 million people internally displaced

7.9 million people food insecure

1.9 million people at risk of food insecurity

Highlights

- In March, WFP dispatched assistance sufficient for an estimated 4.7 million people across its activities in Syria.
- The first COVID-19 case in Syria was confirmed on 22 March. WFP has put in place several contingency measures to avoid the spread of the disease amongst its beneficiaries and staff.
- WFP's School Feeding-programme was suspended in March due to the COVID-19-related closure of all schools countrywide.
- Food prices soared in March, reaching the highest recorded levels since the start of the crisis.
- A ceasefire in the north-west was announced on 06 March, leading to a significant drop in population displacement. WFP reached 1.8 million people with general food assistance in the north-west; a new monthly record.

Situation Update

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- On 22 March, the Ministry of Health announced the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Syria, and the first death was reported on 29 March. By the end of March, 10 cases and two deaths had been reported.
- All schools, universities, public parks, bars, nightclubs, cinemas, citizen centres and markets were closed by authorities in mid-March, while all commercial, service, cultural and social activities, including all public transportation, were suspended.
- WFP put in place several contingency measures to avoid the spread of COVID-19 amongst its beneficiaries, including physical measures at distributions, revised distribution procedures, and postponement of some planned activities.

- Transportation of food products and medical supplies including crossborder traffic, is exempted from the countywide transportation lockdown implemented by authorities. As such, WFP's supply chain remains operational without significant delays.

Economic Situation

- The dramatic devaluation of the Syrian pound continued in March, with the unofficial exchange reaching SYP 1,325/USD 1; the lowest ever recorded.
- The price of the WFP national average food basket increased by 18 percent between over the second half of March alone (since COVID-19 lockdown regulations were announced), and has by now increased by 84 percent compared to March 2019 levels. By the end of March, food prices were at the highest levels recorded since the start of the crisis.

North-Western Syria

- A ceasefire agreement in north-western Syria was announced by Turkish and Russian authorities on 06 March, leading to a halt to airstrikes and significantly reduced rates of population displacement. [As of 22 March](#), the UNHCR-led Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster reported more than 939,000 people displaced since 01 December 2019.
- WFP assisted 83,100 newly displaced people with emergency ready-to-eat rations (RTEs) in north-western Syria in March, significantly down from February as population displacement dropped dramatically following the 06 March ceasefire.
- WFP reached 1.8 million people under the March GFA cycle; for the second consecutive month, a new record for the number of people reached in a single month in north-western Syria.

North-Eastern Syria

- Kurdish authorities announced a curfew across north-eastern Syria on 23 March related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Clashes were reported between Kurdish-led and Turkish-backed forces in several areas of Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates in March, including areas of Tell Tamer, Ras al-Ayn, Tell Abyad and Ayn Issa.
- Multiple attacks by suspected Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) sleeper cells were reported in and around Ar-Raqqa city in March. This is in line with a steady uptick in such events that has been noted in recent months.
- WFP dispatched food assistance sufficient for some 957,000 people across the north-eastern governorates of Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa and Deir Ezzor in March, including the assistance provided in the Al-Hol, Areesha, Roj, Twehinia, Abu Khashab and Mahmoudli IDP camps.

Southern Syria

- On 18 March, shelling by government forces was reported in Jilin, southern Dar'a governorate. Clashes reportedly erupted between non-state armed groups and government forces resulting in the five casualties among the armed groups. WFP reached Jilin and the surrounding areas on 15 and 16 March with GFA to some 13,500 people.
- WFP dispatched food assistance sufficient for some 1.2 million people across the southern governorates of Dar'a, Damascus, Rural Damascus, As-Sweida, and Quneitra in March.

WFP Response

- WFP dispatched humanitarian assistance sufficient for an estimated 4.7 million people across all its activities in Syria in March.
- A total of USD 3.1 million in cash-based transfers (CBT) was distributed to 146,100 beneficiaries across three activities: Nutrition (Malnutrition prevention - support to pregnant and lactating women and girls), Livelihoods and Resilience, and School Feeding (support to out-of-school children).

General Food Assistance Programme

- In March, WFP dispatched general food assistance (GFA) sufficient for some 4.5 million people across all 14 Syrian governorates.
- Cross-border deliveries from Turkey under [UN Security Council Resolution 2165](#) (2014, extended under [Resolution 2504](#) in January 2020), accounted for 27 percent of the total WFP general food assistance dispatched. This includes food rations for some 1.2 million people in opposition-held Idlib governorate and opposition-held areas of Aleppo governorate inaccessible from inside Syria.

Livelihood and Resilience Programme

- In March, WFP reached some 75,600 people under its livelihood and resilience projects across Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Dar'a, As-Sweida, Quneitra, Homs, Hama, Qamishli, Al-Hasakeh, Tartous, and Lattakia governorates.

School Feeding Programme

- As a result of the closure of all schools to curb the spread of COVID-19, WFP's School Feeding-programme was suspended in mid-March, affecting the provision of assistance to more than one million children.
- Ahead of the school closures, WFP reached a total of 286,000 children under the School Feeding activity in March:

- By mid-March, fortified school snacks were distributed to 241,500 children in primary schools of Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Rural Damascus, Damascus, Dar'a, As-Sweida, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir Ezzor, Tartous and Lattakia.
- WFP also supported some 44,500 out-of-school children enrolled in the UNICEF-supported "Curriculum B" accelerated learning programme with cash-based transfers (value vouchers) in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, Hama, Qamishli, Tartous, Lattakia and Aleppo governorates. This programme remained unaffected by the school closures.

Nutrition Programme

- In March, WFP dispatched nutrition products for the prevention of acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies for 387,300 children and pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWG) across Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir Ezzor, Dar'a, Quneitra, Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hama and Homs Damascus governorates. This includes 65,000 PLWG who received nutrition support through CBT to purchase fresh food, including dairy products, meat, fruits and vegetables, from 108 WFP-contracted shops.

Clusters and Common Services

Food Security Sector

- The Food Security Sector in March conducted training of partners and developed guidelines and posters on preventive measures against COVID-19 to enable partners to sustain their provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance.

Logistics Cluster

- In response to the spread of COVID-19, the Logistics Cluster implemented a series of mitigation measures at the cross-border hubs in line with WHO guidelines.

- The Logistics Cluster in March set up a Supply Chain Working Group in Syria as a coordination platform for a potential logistics response to the potential impact of COVID-19 between the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).
- The WFP-led Logistics Cluster facilitated the storage 2,012 m³ of newly received humanitarian goods in its storage facilities in Rural Damascus and Qamishli governorates on behalf of FAO, UNFPA and WHO.
- Facilitating the cross-border operation from Turkey, the Logistics Cluster transhipped 1,486 trucks from Turkey to Syria in March.

Resourcing Update

- Overall, WFP urgently requires USD 238 million to keep operations running through September 2020.
- Due to funding constraints, and to stretch available resources, WFP has been forced to gradually reduce the caloric value of the food basket provided in north-western Syria starting in April.

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For further information, visit the [WFP Syria website](#).
See also the [WFP Syria 2019 Annual Country Report](#).

WFP Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan (2019-2020)

	2020 Requirement (in USD)	6-Month Net Funding Requirement (April - September 2020)	People Assisted (Dispatches) (March 2020)	Female	Male
ICSP (January 2019 – December 2020)	985 m	238 m	4,660,207		
Activity 1: General Food Assistance			4,506,250	2,478,438	2,027,813
Activity 2: School Feeding			286,016	140,148	145,148
Activity 3: Livelihoods and Resilience			75,575	41,016	33,559
Activity 4: Nutrition - Prevention of Acute Malnutrition			387,310	226,732	160,578
Activity 5: Nutrition - Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition			0	0	0