WFP Syria: Cross-border Operations from Turkey

Cross-border Deliveries from Turkey
UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2165 was unanimously adopted in mid 2014, enabling UN agencies to use the border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa (Turkey), Al-Yarubiyah (Iraq) and Ar-Ramtha (Jordan) to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need in areas not accessible from inside Syria. Consequently, in July 2014, WFP started delivering life-saving food assistance to people in Aleppo, Idleb, and Hama governorates through the Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa border crossing points between Turkey and Syria; operations have been coordinated through WFP's Field Office based in Gaziantep in southern Turkey. Subsequent UNSC resolutions extended the authorization for WFP and other UN agencies to conduct cross-border deliveries of humanitarian assistance until 10 January 2018.

Addressing Food Insecurity
WFP has been implementing its cross-border operation from Turkey to provide food assistance for people in opposition-held areas in Aleppo, Idleb and Hama governorates since 2014. The inability to reach these areas from inside Syria due to ongoing fighting and insecurity necessitates a constant humanitarian response. Since cross-border deliveries commenced, more than 1.8 million people have received WFP assistance in opposition-held areas in Aleppo, Idleb and Hama.

General Food Assistance
WFP works closely with seven non-governmental organizations (NGO) to deliver life-saving food assistance through the two border crossings from Turkey to conflict affected people in Syria. The food rations provided are pre-packed by WFP’s contracted suppliers in Turkey. The diversified food rations, consisting of wheat flour, rice, bulgur, white beans, chickpeas, lentils, sugar, salt, and oil, are in line with cultural preferences and serve a family of five for a whole month, providing 1,500 kcal per person per day. Throughout 2017, WFP will continue to target 116,281 households or 581,405 beneficiaries every month in Aleppo (163,105 people), Idleb (412,240 people) and Hama (6,060 people) governorates. During the first quarter of 2017, WFP’s food assistance reached more than 573,000 people.

Immediate Response to Population Displacement
In addition to the general food assistance, WFP provides ready-to-eat (RTE) rations in response to population displacement in northern Syria. These rations are distributed to people during the first days of displacement. The RTE ration meets the needs of a family for a period of five days and it includes canned pulses, canned chicken, canned tuna, canned vegetables, thyme, olive oil, and juice. During the first quarter of 2017, WFP and its partners provided RTE rations for over 41,000 people who have fled from violence.
**Nutrition Interventions**

Conflict and displacement in northern Syria have adverse effects on access to and availability of nutritious food. To address moderate acute malnutrition in children and pregnant and nursing women, who are particularly affected by the lack of nutritious food, WFP provides specialized foods to these two vulnerable groups through a programme for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition. Throughout 2017, WFP will target on average 44,000 young children and pregnant and nursing women in Aleppo, Idleb and Hama through both programmes.

**Trans-shipment**

To ensure the quick transfer and delivery of humanitarian cargo from Turkey into opposition-controlled areas in Aleppo, Idleb and Hama governorates, the WFP-lead Logistics Cluster has set up two transshipment hubs at Bab al Hawa and at Bab al Salam border-crossing points.

In Turkey, UN agencies and their partners move their humanitarian cargo on Turkish trucks to the transshipment hubs at the border crossings. Humanitarian agencies then arrange for Syrian trucks to come to the transshipment points, where the Logistics Cluster is responsible for coordinating the transfer of humanitarian cargo from Turkish onto Syrian trucks inside the transshipment zone. Furthermore, the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM) ensures that the goods loaded on the Syrian trucks are of a humanitarian nature. Syrian trucks then proceed to cooperating partners’ warehouses where the food assistance is subsequently stored before it is distributed at food distribution points.

**Challenges**

The volatile situation inside Syria continues to pose a major security challenge to the Syria Operation as a whole, and in particular to the cross-border operation from Turkey in opposition-held areas in northern Syria.

The safety of trucks, as well as the safety of staff and humanitarian goods of WFP’s implementing partners on the ground, represents a paramount concern that occasionally adversely impacts WFP’s operation in the respective areas.

Moreover, the current capacity of the two border crossing points of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa cannot exceed 22 trucks per day. However, WFP continues to conduct planned deliveries with high efficiency.