



World Food Programme



Syria Crisis Regional Response Situation Report

March/April 2017

In Numbers

5 million refugees in the Region (Source: UNHCR)

2.2 million assisted by WFP in March

2.2 million assisted by WFP in April

GENDER MARKER **2A**  PRRO 200987



**Regional
Refugee &
Resilience Plan
(3RP) 2017-
2018**

Overall:

USD 4.68b

WFP share:

USD 1.33b

REG PRRO 200987 Net Funding Requirements:

(June 2017-December 2017)

USD 206.5 million*

* Including confirmed pledges and solid forecasts

Highlights

- In April, Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) payments reached 507,321 vulnerable refugees across Turkey, an important milestone towards assisting one million people. In total, over 276,000 family applications—some 1.4 million people—have been received by 28 April according to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP).
- In his first official field visit to WFP Lebanon operation, the Executive Director endorsed the Lebanon Country Strategic Plan (2018-2010).
- In partnership with UNDP, WFP Jordan began implementing vocational training in food processing, electronic maintenance and carpentry.
- WFP's Syria regional response within the five neighbouring countries is currently funded through the first half of 2017, with a break in assistance expected to start during the second half of the year. To ensure continued assistance throughout the next seven months (June-December 2017), WFP needs an additional USD 206.5 million in new contributions.

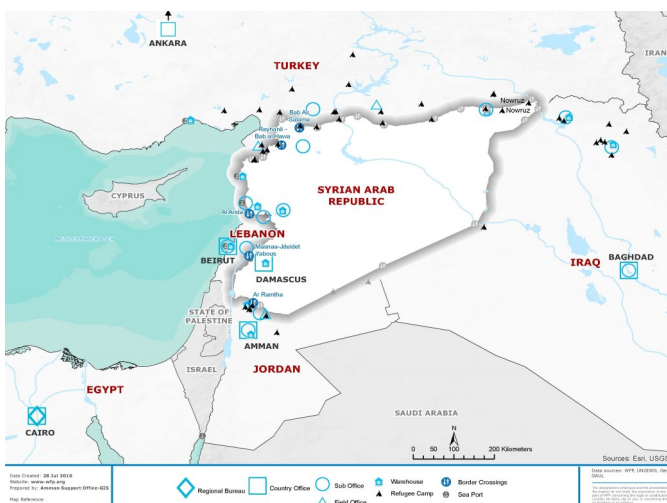
Situation Update

In April, in a major overhaul of **Turkey's** political system, referendum voters narrowly approved constitutional amendments greatly broadening the powers of the presidency. On 17 April, the government extended Turkey's state of emergency, initially imposed after the July 2016 coup attempt.

The Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) reported in early April that no accelerated influx of Syrian refugees was expected as a result of the chemical attack in Idlib. Turkey currently hosts around 3 million refugees. The head of TRC announced that a new refugee camp was being built in Jarablus.

Following the closure of **Jordan's Ramtha border** in February 2017 due to an escalation of conflict in Southern Syria, the cross-border operation was resumed in March with no major incidents reported. In parallel, the Jordanian Armed Forces have increased the presence of defensive systems along the borders with Syria in order to counteract any potential spillover.

In March, annual inflation rates in **Egypt** reached a historic peak of 32.5% for the Consumer Price Index and 43% for Food Index. The rise in inflation rates that followed economic reforms in 2016 is marked by several local and international organizations as a "key concern". This is reflected in the increased cost of the



Regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200987: Assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees and host communities in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey

**Main
Photo**

Credit: WFP/Edward Johnson
Caption: WFP Executive Director David Beasley is welcomed at an informal tent settlement in the Bekaa Valley during his first field visit to Lebanon.

minimum expenditure food basket for Syrian refugees.

Humanitarian needs in western Mosul in **Iraq** remain high, with shortages of food and water being reported. Although some areas of western Mosul are accessible to humanitarian partners, regular water supply has been very severely impacted by the conflict resulting in serious shortages of water supplies of acceptable quality. Areas where Syrian refugees are residing in camps in northern Iraq are still accessible and served.

Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region – Brussels Conference

The European Union, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, Qatar, the United Kingdom and the United Nations co-chaired the Brussels Conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region, on 4-5 April 2017. The conference brought together 70 countries, international organisations and civil society.

The conference aimed to assess where the international community stands collectively in fulfilling commitments made at the London Conference in February 2016. It also intended to reconfirm existing pledges and identify additional support to Syrians inside Syria and in neighbouring countries, and to the respective host communities in response to the UN-coordinated appeals.

Participants have pledged USD 6 billion for 2017, and multi-year pledges of USD 3.73 billion for 2018-2020 to:

- Support humanitarian, resilience and development activities and meet the immediate and basic needs of those affected in Syria;
- Support resilience and development efforts in Syria while helping host countries address the impact of the protracted crisis ;
- Secure quality education for all children, increase access to vocational training and livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities - closely aligned with private sector labor needs - and promote basic public services and economic growth for the benefit of all.

WFP Response

Food Assistance (targeted vs. reached available on last page)

Turkey:

March: WFP reached 767,354 people: 407,544 through ESSN, 216,640 off-camp (pre-ESSN caseload transitioning to ESSN through application) and 143,000 in-camp.

April: WFP reached 826,277 people. In April, 507,321 refugees in Turkey received ESSN payments of 100 Turkish Lira per person per month. This is an important milestone towards WFP's target of assisting more than 1,000,000 of the most vulnerable refugees in the country in 2017. All refugees are eligible to apply for the ESSN. In total, over 276,000 family

applications (representing some 1.38 million people) had been received by 28 April.

Since the start of the ESSN roll-out, WFP field staff have monitored 78 provinces out of 81, covering 411 districts and visiting 366 Social Solidarity and Assistance Foundations, 18 Service Centres (including newly opened centres in Istanbul and Izmir), and 198 Halkbank branches. Many have been visited multiple times and monitoring is ongoing.

On 19 April, the ESSN's Governing Board met to discuss issues including obstacles to application, reducing exclusion and inclusion errors, and revising the transfer value.

April saw WFP phase out its previous off-camp cash transfer programme. The final month of the off-camp programme saw payments of 100 Turkish Liras each made to 170,232 beneficiaries. All beneficiaries have been encouraged to apply for the ESSN. A survey indicated that almost all had applied to the ESSN.

In addition, in April, 143,590 vulnerable Syrians living in 11 camps in the south east of Turkey continued to receive 50 Turkish Liras (USD 18)* per person per month from WFP to be spent on food, complemented by assistance provided by Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD).

WFP and the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC/Kizilay) coordinated with UNICEF on its Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) programme. Starting with payments for the month of May, the CCTE will provide cash transfers to vulnerable refugee families with children regularly attending school through the same Kizilaykart card used by the ESSN.

By the end of April, WFP had completed 80 percent of the calls planned for its ESSN baseline survey, and analysis is ongoing. Also, staff in all offices nationwide had been trained in conducting Focus Group Discussions to get beneficiary feedback. Such discussions will enable WFP to better measure the impact of the ESSN on the affected communities and beneficiaries.

Lebanon:

March: WFP reached 719,643 people: 692,907 Syrian refugees, 16,202 Palestinian refugees from Syria, and 10,534 children through school meals activities. Over 500 Syrian and Lebanese participants benefited from the digital skills programme implemented in cooperation with the American University of Beirut.

April: WFP reached 717,816 people: 692,107 Syrian refugees; 16,252 Palestinian refugees from Syria; and 10,534 reached through school snacks. Additionally, 46,572 recipients were reached through Cash for Education.

Assistance provided to the targeted vulnerable Lebanese under the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) is still on hold pending the finalization of agreement with the government as well as receiving funds.

*Due to fluctuations in the exchange rate, USD values are approximations

Resilience and livelihoods projects are being identified together and beneficiaries with cooperating partners. An expanded livelihood portfolio is in progress together with the support of cooperating partners. The full range of projects are expected to commence in July 2017.

The school meals activity continued and 17 more schools have been selected and will begin receiving assistance in May. The school snack programme will now reach a total of 38 schools, and 16,400 children (Lebanese children with few Syrians within morning shift, and Syrian children in the afternoon shift). The 1,000,000th snack day was celebrated in March at Sin El Fil Third School, with attendance from the Director General of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

WFP Lebanon is in the process of merging to WFP's SCOPE platform. SCOPE's web-based application is used for beneficiary registration, intervention set-ups, distribution planning, transfers and reporting. It enhances targeting quality, reduces inclusion errors and improves emergency preparedness, while ensuring the segregation of duties between staff and providing a secure environment for generating and transferring beneficiary payments lists. A LOUISE (Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organisational System for E-Cards) communications group was established to coordinate joint communications messages between WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and LCC (Lebanese Cash Consortium) on the joint system. Updates will be shared through a common website to be launched in May.

The Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) for 2017 is being prepared for in collaboration with UNHCR and UNICEF. Data collection is planned to take place in May 2017.

Jordan:

March: WFP reached a total of 533,638 people with e-cards and paper vouchers: 424,706 in communities and 108,932 in camps. Inside camps, 25,676 children received date bars as part of the school meals programme. In addition, 2,550 (supporting 12,750 people) participated in resilience and livelihood activities.

April: WFP reached a total of 533,943 with e-cards and paper vouchers: 424,947 in communities and 108,996 in camps. Inside camps, 25,419 children received date bars as part of the school meals programme. In communities, 350,000 children received school meals, as well as 11,400 children who received meals through the Healthy Kitchen project. In addition, 2,912 (supporting 14,560 people) participated in resilience and livelihood activities.

WFP continued to participate in interagency coordination over the berm as WFP is the designated lead for food security and logistics. The next distribution at the berm is pending engagement of third-party monitoring. WFP is

working with partners to ensure monitoring of distribution is carried out effectively without compromising the security measures enforced by the Jordanian Armed Forces.

To ensure transparency and accountability towards people assisted and donors, WFP started a validation exercise during April in all governorates of Jordan for refugees benefiting from its relief assistance in communities. The exercise verifies that each WFP card is owned and utilized by the right household. All Syrian refugees entitled to WFP assistance were informed about the validation exercise purpose, date and location through SMS messages, posters and leaflets prior to the start date.

In partnership with the Royal Health Awareness Society (RHAS), WFP resumed its Healthy Kitchen Project in communities, reaching a total of 11,400 schoolchildren attending schools in the five most food-insecure governorates. By the end of April, WFP also resumed the project in Za'atri camp, reaching around 18,000 schoolchildren attending formal schools. Meals were provided by the healthy kitchen sites operating in communities.

WFP reached 14,560 vulnerable Syrians and Jordanians through its livelihood projects, in partnership with UNDP, UN Women, RHAS, National Alliance Against Hunger and Malnutrition (NAJMAH) and Talal Abu Ghazaleh institute (TAG). Activities include emergency employment, the Healthy Kitchen project, digital learning and agricultural activities, skills exchange and vocational training.

WFP and the National Centre for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE) signed a letter of understanding to work together on the Food Computer pilot project for a period of four months. Implementation and research will take place at NCARE site in Mafrqa governorate. The pilot explores how a food computer can be used to provide fresh and economical food – on a scalable level - in remote areas with high population density and food insecurity, including Azraq refugee camp, and will engage Syrian refugees trained to use the food computer. NCARE will receive six food computers to test different types of crops in line with MIT University, where the food computers were invented.

Egypt:

March: WFP reached 75,875 refugees in March: 73,063 Syrian refugees and 2,812 Palestinian refugees from Syria.

April: WFP reached 75,618 refugees in April: 72,879 Syrian refugees and 2,829 Palestinian Refugees from Syria.

In light of the availability of funds, in April, the voucher value was increased again from the temporary 300 EGP to the original 400 EGP (USD 22*), based on the latest update of the market value of the food basket and UN exchange rate.

*Due to fluctuations in the exchange rate, USD values are approximations

Awareness campaigns and several information sessions were held in Obour and Alexandria to inform Syrian refugees about the different upcoming livelihood activities WFP is offering and will be starting soon. Livelihood activities details as well as the applications are posted on WFP's Facebook page.

The first soft skills training started in March for Syrian refugees and host community members in Obour and "the 6th October" district in Cairo. Trainings are conducted through Logic Training & HR Development. Participants are required to attend 75 percent of the training sessions to be entitled to receive cash-based transfers from WFP.

Verification exercises took place in Egypt in March 2017 in all distribution sites, where beneficiaries redeem Carrefour and Fathalla e-cards. Results of the anti-fraud verification process showed that almost 94 percent of the cases are physically present in the country and received their new e-cards. Verification has eliminated the duplication of beneficiaries, removed the beneficiaries who have left the country from the WFP food assistance list, and eliminated the beneficiaries who do not show up in the distribution sites.

Additional focus group discussions (FGDs) were held in March with Syrians and Egyptians in Alexandria, Damietta, Obour and 6th of October in order to develop the Social Cohesion Index. The Social Cohesion Index aims to provide insight towards how well the Syrian community and the host community are integrated. Issues such as economic and work conditions, inter-relations, and social values are covered during FGDs. As such, the findings will help reveal qualitative data on the level of interdependence.

The first quarterly Food Security Outcome Monitoring data (FSOM) revealed that the acceptable Food Consumption Score is 70 percent for those assisted and 43 percent for those excluded. The equivalent figures in Q4 of 2016 were 85 percent and 56 percent respectively. This deterioration is most likely attributed to the lower voucher value in Q1 as well as a noticeable increase in food prices, highlighting the importance of sustaining food assistance and full plans.

Iraq:

March: WFP assisted 54,668 Syrians in nine refugee camps, of whom 999 people received unrestricted cash.

April: WFP reached 54,961 Syrians in nine refugee camps, of whom 997 people received unrestricted cash.

A new hotline for receiving complaints and feedback from refugees is now in operation. This service is free of charge and helps WFP to be more accountable to beneficiaries and those in need. Awareness of feedback/accountability mechanisms has previously been low amongst beneficiaries.

A timeline for the vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees has been agreed with UNHCR. The assessment will take place in May 2017 and will be conducted on a sampling basis and is expected to produce a set of targeting indicators. These indicators will target Syrians in Iraq and further enable a needs-based refinement of current caseloads. Latest Food Security Outcome Monitoring (FSOM) presented stabilized Food consumption scores. High dietary diversity and coping strategy usage had declined since the previous FSOM report.

The regional operation has injected USD 3 billion into local economies in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Turkey, through the voucher transfer value, local food procurement and other expenditure.

Please see last page for detailed figures on the operation.

Beneficiary Story: Skills Transfer in Jordan

As Syrian refugees begin to rebuild their lives in the city of Mafraq in Jordan, they have come to make up an entire half of its population, which has nearly doubled since 2012. As new neighbours settle into the community, tensions can be inevitable, and a proper introduction of the two groups becomes imperative. The UN views this unique evolution of Mafraq not as a threat to the community, but rather as a vital opportunity for Syrians and Jordanians to support one another, believing that each group has something to gain from the other. For this reason, UNDP and WFP, in partnership with Jordan's Business Development Centre, have introduced a new project providing the opportunity for Jordanians and Syrians to work together. The Skills Transfer Programme gives Syrian refugees the ability to practise their skills without facing the challenge of obtaining a work permit, while also providing training and employment to vulnerable Jordanians. One of the Syrian participants, Hamda Al Sirri, 23, left her home in Homs, Syria in 2011 after losing her husband in the war. She believes "There is huge demand for custom-made clothes. I can do it from the comfort of my own home [and] it is innovative, as I have to create something different from what is available in the shops."

Al Sirri now lives in the village of Zaatari with her family, who have supported her through her loss. The young Syrian has great passion for fashion design. It was her mother's sewing machine that led her to begin creating clothes — ultimately leading her to study fashion at school back in Syria, where she would exhibit her work annually. She is especially excited to transfer her skills and ideas across to someone who can put them into practice. She adds that she already feels an affinity for her Jordanian trainees and expects the programme to create a strong connection between Syrians and Jordanians.

High school graduate Marah, 21, will be one of Hamda's students for the training. Marah has high hopes and expectations for her future. "It is important [that] I plan my life and learn new skills. I will not just stay at home. I am very optimistic about this course because I will learn valuable things that can help me continue with my university [education] afterwards. But first I must get the basics right," she adds. After the course, Marah plans to apply to Zarqa University to gain more work experience before ultimately opening her own clothing business. She welcomes the opportunity to be trained by a Syrian seamstress, saying Syrians are very skilled and creative people.

Apart from the vocational and financial benefits this project entails for people like Marah and Hamda, the true value of the UNDP-WFP skills transfer programme lies in it being an exercise in enhancing the rapport between Syrians and Jordanians in the Zaatari village and the city of Mafraq. The skills programme works to bring the two groups together to meet each other's needs. The programme is a reflection of WFP's future in humanitarian assistance, as it evolves from direct aid to resiliency and development assistance. It is also a reflection of the hopeful future for people like Marah and Hamda, giving them opportunities to grow and work together as neighbours.

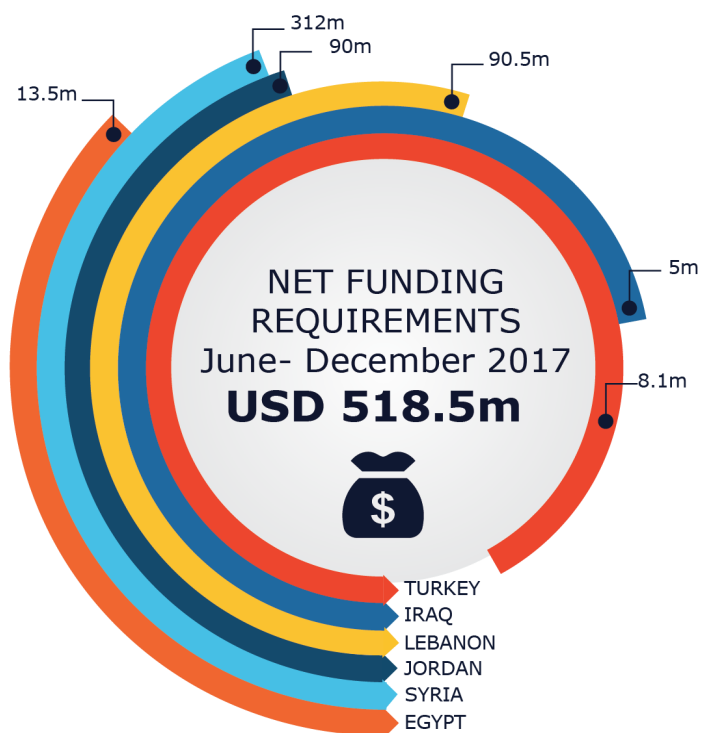


Top: Hamda Al Sirri
Bottom: Marah
Photos by: Lara Darwazeh

Resourcing Update

With contributions confirmed to date and solid forecasts, against which WFP has advanced funding to avert pipeline breaks, WFP's regional response to the Syria crisis is currently covered through the first half of 2017, with breaks in assistance expected to start during the second half of the year. To ensure continued assistance throughout the next seven months (June-December 2017), WFP needs an additional **USD 518.5 million** in new contributions: **USD 312 million** for inside Syria and **USD 206.5 million** for the region.

Having a reliable and predictable funding enables WFP to strengthen its Accountability to Affected Population and dialogue with host governments and communities, while having the resources and space to invest in much-needed resilience-building activities. For this, WFP highly appreciates the commitments from a number of donors to provide longer-term, multi-year funding for the WFP response in Syria and the region.



A SPECIAL FEATURE

RESTRICTED VOUCHERS OR UNRESTRICTED CASH? HOW TO BEST SUPPORT SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN AND LEBANON

A Study Conducted by the Boston Consulting Group, February 2017

The World Food Programme (WFP) plays a pivotal role in the food security of Syrian refugees within the "Syria +5" region. WFP periodically reviews its operational approach to consider the best modality for varying phases of the response, including the pros and cons of delivering assistance through unrestricted cash as opposed to food-restricted value vouchers electronically redeemed at designated WFP-contracted retailers.

The objective of the study was to compare the impact of WFP's delivery modality for refugees living in host communities in Jordan and Lebanon, whether through unrestricted cash or food-restricted value voucher on: (1) food security and other basic needs of beneficiaries and; (2) the program's cost-effectiveness for WFP.

This study found the delivery of food assistance in the form of unrestricted cash to be cost-effective. The benefit of cash over the food-restricted value voucher was particularly pronounced when food security was low. This feature can increase beneficiary resilience in the face of some external shocks. Although study participants were Syrian refugees living across Jordan and Lebanon, findings may well be applicable to comparable contexts where cash-savvy refugee populations live in host country settings with relatively large and functional markets.

Unrestricted cash is recommended as an effective modality to deliver food assistance, especially at the outset of an assistance program in similar contexts. Additionally, ATM network coverage and unrestricted debit-card payment facilities are still limited in some localities in both countries. In such scenarios, assistance could be optimally delivered through the modality of choice, whereby beneficiaries can freely choose their assistance as unrestricted cash, value vouchers, or a mix of both.

Cash produced food security results superior or equal to those of vouchers*

Measured using WFP's standard Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators (CARI) methodology, food security outcomes were better with cash in three out of five PDM rounds of post-distribution monitoring and equal in the remaining two rounds.

The modality did not affect beneficiary expenditure on food. On average, both the cash and voucher groups spent approximately twice the WFP assistance value on food. It is important to note that both groups spent the total value of the WFP assistance on food—that is, the cash group did not reduce its spending on food despite having the flexibility to spend on other needs.

The cash group's improved food consumption outcomes were not achieved through increased reliance on coping strategies. Results demonstrated that both groups used consumption-based and livelihood coping strategies equally. Cash buyers did not buy more food on credit than voucher buyers did, nor did they rely on less expensive or less preferred food.

Cash advantage augmented in more challenging contexts

Cash proved particularly advantageous when food security was lower. For those with a higher food security score, cash performed as well as vouchers. It is notable that cash did not perform worse than vouchers. One conclusion is that cash offered a normalizing, shock-absorber effect that helped beneficiaries cope with contextual changes.

Similar spending on non-food basic needs, and comparable results

Beneficiary households in both Jordan and Lebanon typically spend 38 to 45 percent of their monthly income on food, 24 to 30 percent on rent, and 30 to 33 percent on other non-food items. The modality switch did not change spending behavior, not even on temptation goods such as tobacco. These trends remained consistently similar over time (up to eight months in Jordan).

Beneficiaries prefer cash to vouchers

In both Jordan and Lebanon, more than 75 percent of households favored cash assistance, citing three key reasons: higher purchasing power; flexibility and the capacity to manage cash flow; and dignity and empowerment. Reasons for preferring vouchers over cash centered on logistics related to ATM location, and on the perception that the food-restricted nature of vouchers helps people discipline their spending on food.

Cost-effectiveness of switching the voucher program to cash

A move to cash assistance would imply a change of business model. Under the e-voucher programme, the partner bank generates revenues from the transaction fee from retailers when a beneficiary uses the e-card. Changing to cash would require WFP to absorb the fees.

Although this dimension by itself does not fully tip the scale toward one modality or the other, from an operational cost perspective there are no evident drawbacks for cash.

Contacts

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* The study has some limitations and results should be used with care.

SYRIA +5 REGIONAL RESPONSE UPDATE - APRIL 2017 DISTRIBUTIONS

	IDPs / Registered Refugees	Targeted Beneficiaries ^[1]	Assisted Beneficiaries ^[1]	%	Money Injected in Local Economies ^[2]	Modalities Used	Food basket / Cash Based Transfer Entitlements
SYRIA	6,300,000	4,000,000	4,161,300	104%	USD 274 m	Family Food Basket, Supplementary feeding Cash Based Transfers - using paper vouchers School Feeding Snacks	Food Basket 1,500 Kcal per person per day Pregnant and ^[4] nursing women USD29 (SYP 15,520) Out of School Children USD 24 (SYP 12,920)
TURKEY	2,992,567	900,000	826,277	92%	USD 762 m ^[3]	Cash Based Transfers - using E-cards and unrestricted cash	In-camps USD18 (TL 50) Off-camps USD36 (TL 100) ESSN USD36 (TL 100) ^[4] Government of Turkey provides another USD 14 on a separate card to meet complementary food and non-food needs inside camps
LEBANON	1,011,366	840,715	717,817	85%	USD 959 m	Cash Based Transfers -using E-cards and Cash School Feeding Snacks	Vulnerable USD27 (LBP 40,500)
JORDAN	659,246	533,593	533,943	100%	USD 777 m	Cash Based Transfers -using E-cards and paper vouchers School Feeding Snacks	Off-camps: Vulnerable USD14.1 (JOD 10) Extremely Vulnerable USD28.2 (JOD 20) In-camp USD28.2 (JOD 20)
EGYPT	120,154	75,664	75,618	100%	USD 132 m	Cash Based Transfers - using E-cards and paper vouchers	Vulnerable USD22 (EGP 400) ^[4]
IRAQ	236,772	55,671	54,961	99%	USD 91 m	Cash Based Transfers -using SCOPE and cash	Vulnerable USD19 (IQD 20,000)

[1] Targeted and assisted figures only cover food assistance activities.

[2] Includes local food procurements, CBT transfers and other expenditures since the start of operation

[3] Turkey is WFP's top food commodity supplier with \$1.45 billion worth of commodities procured since 2011.

[4] Due to fluctuation of the exchange rate, USD values are approximations only.



Syrian in communities



Syrian refugees in camps



Palestinian refugees from Syria



Vulnerable Lebanese



IDPs

LIVELIHOODS AND RESILIENCE

Rehabilitation of bakeries	Kitchen gardens	Vocational Skills Training	Bee-keeping value chain	Support to local agricultural production	Agricultural Support	Cash for work rural roads rehabilitation	Digital Skills and Impact Sourcing Pilot	Vocational Training	Emergency Employment	Healthy Kitchens	Agriculture Activities	Skills Exchange
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Syria



Lebanon



Jordan



6.3 million

IDPs inside Syria

6,369,916

Assisted in Syria and the Region

5.0 million

Refugees in the Region



Partners in Syria



USD 3.0*
billion

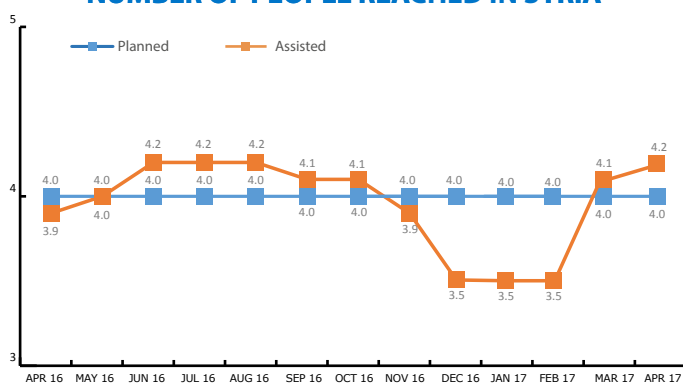
Money Injected in Syria and the Region

*as of end of April 2017

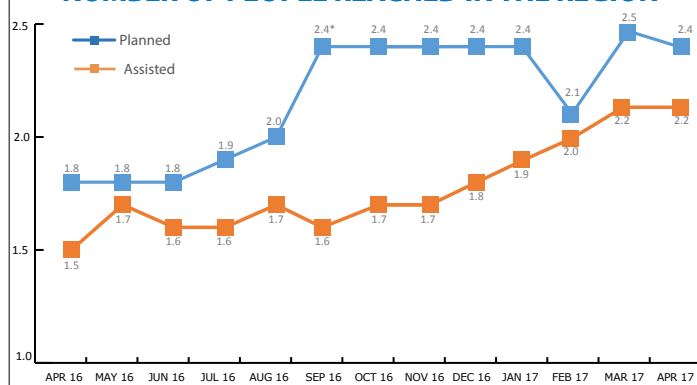


Partners in the Region

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED IN SYRIA



NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED IN THE REGION



*Budget Revision 17 increased the overall beneficiaries in 2016