HIGHLIGHTS

- No food assistance reaches Syria’s Al-Hasakeh in June, as humanitarian situation worsens in the governorate.

- In Syria, WFP provides assistance to 46 percent of Ar-Raqqa’s caseload for the first time in months.

- WFP helps families maintain traditions as Ramadan approaches.
No WFP food deliveries to Al-Hasakeh in June as humanitarian situation worsens

In Al-Hasakeh, intense fighting within and outside the governorate continues to ravage the region, disrupting the economy, impoverishing local communities and driving significant population displacement. The devastating impact of the conflict is further compounded by severe access restrictions, including continued closure of borders and widespread fighting in neighbouring governorates blocking access routes, which have prevented the humanitarian community from providing sustained and adequate levels of assistance to the governorate for the past year. As a result, none of the allocated WFP assistance reached the governorate in June, leaving a targeted 227,000 people without much needed food.

Large numbers of IDPs are now concentrated in the main urban centres of the governorate, fleeing violence in rural areas as well as in nearby Deir-ez-Zor and Aleppo governorates. Numbers are expected to rise in the coming weeks, as a reprisal of daily airstrikes in the rural villages of Tal Hamis, Tal Brak and Al-Hol in the south of the governorate is resulting in the forced evacuation of people from these areas. Further aggravating the internal situation, Al-Hasakeh is witnessing spillovers from the ongoing crisis in neighbouring Iraq. During the first two weeks of June, hundreds of Iraqis sought refuge on the Syrian side of the border, as militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) took over Mosul and Tikrit in the north of the country. UNHCR and SARC have immediately begun registering and assessing the conditions of affected families scattered in different parts of the governorate. According to preliminary information, at least 100 people have settled in Hakamieh camp, managed by the Kurdish High Relief Committee and located in close proximity to the Fishkhabour border crossing with Iraq. In addition, over 400 Iraqis were identified close to the Ya’rubiyah and in Twaimeen, in southern Al-Hasakeh.

Faced with persistent access challenges, WFP continues to seek alternative channels to respond to a mounting humanitarian crisis in the governorate. In particular, with all access from inside Syria interrupted since August 2013, intense negotiation allowed WFP to truck food assistance into the governorate through the Nusaybin crossing point along the border with Turkey. However, deliveries through this corridor remain intermittent and unpredictable, and have only allowed limited quantities of assistance to the governorate so far. While regular and predictable deliveries from Turkey remain a key priority for WFP, faced with continued delays and uncertainties over the reopening of the Nusaybin corridor, WFP is considering resuming emergency airlifts to meet the growing need for food.

Household Assessment in Quamishli

A recent partner household verification and assessment mission of IDPs in Al-Hasakeh – covering over 1,000 households in Quamishli – found an increasing number of families to be resorting to unsustainable coping strategies. With most households located in the poor areas in the outskirts of the city, the assessment found families to have very limited, or no, source of income, while apartments were overcrowded with below standard hygienic services, no running water and limited electricity. The assessment hence confirmed the vulnerability status of these families and recommended continued humanitarian assistance.
Transport bottlenecks start to ease

Following a slow start, June transport activities proceeded more quickly near the end of the cycle, with dispatch rates gradually resuming to levels observed prior to the introduction of the transport system at the end of April.

During the first half of the cycle, dispatch levels were similar or slightly lower than those observed in May, when the cycle had been heavily affected by delays and challenges in streamlining the new procedure, and hurdles affected all levels of the production and delivery line. Difficulties in obtaining facilitation letters deadlocked dispatches from ports and delayed the arrival of food supplies at WFP warehouses. Concurrently, packaging and assemblage of food rations were stalled. In early June, the Lattakia facility was forced to temporarily suspend packaging of rations due to a congestion of trucks awaiting approval to move to their destination. Similarly, dispatches from Safita warehouse to northern Syria were heavily disrupted by delays in obtaining facilitation letters.

As the standardization of the new procedure progressed, an ease in the bottlenecks significantly increased dispatch rates during the second half of the cycle. As of 28 June, WFP had achieved 69 percent of its dispatch plan, a 10 percent increase compared to May levels. Accordingly, as the cycle nears conclusion, final June dispatches are expected to be higher than those achieved in May, when only 77 percent of the plan was fulfilled. In addition, in spite of the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the new procedures, the truck sealing requirements introduced under the new mechanism have so far improved the security of the cargo by helping to prevent petty pilferage during the transport and by expediting the movement of the trucks through the main checkpoints encountered en route.

WFP provides assistance to 46 percent of its caseload in Ar-Raqqa for the first time in months

In spite of challenges in dispatching food assistance across the country, a spike in deliveries to the hard-to-reach governorate of Ar-Raqqa was registered during the June cycle. Successful negotiations between partners, local authorities and armed groups controlling access routes resulted in 26,321 family food rations entering the governorate during the first half of the month, providing sufficient assistance for over 131,000 vulnerable individuals in the governorate. These breakthroughs enabled WFP to fulfill 46 percent of its monthly plan in the governorate by 12 June, a result which had not been achieved since October 2013, when Ar-Raqqa was last accessible in a regular and sustained way.

WFP steps up assistance in Rural Damascus and Homs, as fighting forces thousands to flee

In Rural Damascus, the villages of Khan Danoun, Khiaarah, Al-Thawra, Ein Al-Baid, Mqailiba, Al-Tayba and Zakia have witnessed increasing levels of fighting in the past four weeks, displacing over 15,000 people the past month. The majority of the newly displaced are staying in shelters or host communities in Kisweh, while some families have also relocated to nearby villages of Al-Baradah, Qatanah, Jdaydet Artoz and Damascus city to stay with relatives or friends. In Kisweh, the recent influx is putting additional pressure on already overstretched resources, as public shelters are completely full and IDP families resort to residing in overcrowded makeshift and unfinished buildings. With resources and available services proving increasingly inadequate, humanitarian conditions are rapidly deteriorating. In response, WFP is increasing food assistance, with 2,000 rations already dispatched at the beginning of June and a further 1,000 dispatched over the reporting period, covering the food needs of 15,000 people.
Elsewhere in Rural Damascus, fighting resumed in Qalamoun, compelling civilians to flee towards safer Wadi Barda and Damascus city, while heavy military operations continue to take place in western Ghouta mainly targeting Mliha, Jobar and Douma.

In the neighbouring governorate of Homs, some 2,750 people were forced to flee the villages of Jabborin and Um Sharshouh, following attacks by armed groups. Displaced families were assisted by SARC, who provided them with WFP ready-to-eat rations, to respond to their needs for the first days of their displacement, when they are unlikely to have access to cooking facilities.

SARC urges warring sides to grant humanitarian access to Deir-ez-Zor as needs increase

Intense fighting between armed opposition groups in rural eastern Deir-ez-Zor, which has continue unabated since late April, has forced an estimated 150,000 people to flee their homes. Entire villages, including Al Dahla, Al-Sowar, Al-Sabha and Khasham are empty, with safer areas such as Al-Mayadeen and surrounding villages struggling to absorb a growing number of arrivals. WFP remains unable to provide sufficient assistance to meet its monthly target for the governorate, as widespread insecurity along the access routes is preventing deliveries. As a result, during the April and May cycles, less than 10 percent of the planned assistance reached the governorate. With humanitarian conditions rapidly deteriorating and access constraints hindering assistance, on 19 June SARC urgently appealed to the humanitarian community to increase relief supplies in the governorate. SARC also urged parties to the conflict to facilitate the work of its volunteers and guarantee safe passage of aid convoys.
Food Assistance In Ramadan: Maintaining Tradition During The Holy Month

This year marks the third Ramadan since the outbreak of conflict in Syria and many who observe the daily dawn-till-dusk fast will be unable to celebrate as they once did at home. Despite the multiple challenges that Syrian families face as a result of displacement across the region, WFP is ensuring that food assistance supports families’ efforts to maintain their regular traditions and practices, particularly during the upcoming holy month.

Vouchers support food traditions using existing markets

Ninety-six percent of WFP’s beneficiaries in the region receive voucher assistance, over two thirds of which are assisted through e-cards. Vouchers allow beneficiaries to purchase food according to their families’ preferences and needs, a benefit of the modality that is especially important during Ramadan when households prepare a variety of traditional dishes. Staple food items such as meat, chicken, eggs, dairy and fresh produce are often in high demand during this time but are highly difficult to procure, store and distribute as part of traditional food assistance modalities. By contracting shops already working in communities across the region, the voucher programme uses existing markets accustomed to procuring high-demand commodities during Ramadan, making many traditionally significant products available for purchase through vouchers. Furthermore, many of these products require refrigeration—which often poses a challenge for refugees residing in camps and informal tented settlements – and can be bought in smaller quantities with e-cards that are redeemable many times throughout the month.

Vulnerable families in Jordan and Lebanon to break fast with Saudi dates

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has provided a generous 4,000 mt donation of dates to WFP for distribution in Jordan and Lebanon. Dates are a culturally significant commodity during the Holy Month and are traditionally used to break one’s fast.

In Lebanon, distributions will take place among newly arrived Syrian refugees alongside food parcel assistance as well as among Syrian refugees in informal tented settlements and collective shelters. Dates will also be distributed to vulnerable Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian families participating in meals served in communal kitchens during Ramadan. In Jordan, WFP and its cooperating partners, as well as the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation, will distribute the dates to Syrian refugees and Jordanians in need over a three month period, which includes Ramadan.

Shop hours extended; distributions to be held earlier

As Syrians typically shop later in the evening during Ramadan, partner shop hours will be adjusted across the region, providing beneficiaries with greater flexibility to purchase food. Some of WFP’s partner supermarkets will also have special offers on selected merchandise for Ramadan, including nuts and dates. Across the region, voucher and food distribution times will also be adjusted to end earlier than usual to avoid beneficiaries waiting for extended periods of time in the hot weather and to ensure that distributions are completed prior to the Eid al-Fitr celebrations.
**OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS**

Refugees registered and awaiting registration*: 1,093,069

Reached in May: 744,488
(715,210 vouchers; 29,278 parcels)

Plan for June: 813,589
(770,333 vouchers; 43,256 parcels)

*UNHCR registration figures
**Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR manifest where WFP targets approximately 70% of the caseload
Reconciliation of figures ongoing

Through its cooperating partners, WFP has thus far attained 92 percent of its operational plan for June, reaching over 762,000 beneficiaries through e-cards (98 percent) and food parcels (2 percent). The deteriorating security situation in North Bekaa has led to the postponement of some food parcel distributions and monitoring activities in the region. Despite these delays, WFP plans to complete all activities by the end of the month.

**WFP completes field level data collection for 2014 VASyR**

Field level data collection at the household level and focus group discussion were completed in early June. A statistically valid sample of the households, a total of 1,750, were interviewed in 115 communities with a large density of refugees while 40 focus group discussions were conducted in 38 locations across the country. During these discussions, refugees reported rent and residential permits as two major difficulties, followed by a hostile environment in communities, as well as a decrease in the overall level of assistance received. Refugees felt that their situation was similar or worse than six months ago and expected it to worsen in the medium to long term. WFP plans to share preliminary results from its field level data collection activities with other agencies by the end of this month. The 2014 VASyR will provide a multi-sectoral overview of the vulnerability situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon one year after the original VASyR in 2013. They study will analyse the main changes in the refugees’ living conditions compared to last year, take into consideration the major factors affecting these changes and recommend steps forward.

**Partner monitoring expanded and improved**

Monitoring requirements for cooperating partners have been amended to reflect lessons learnt from the past monitoring period. As such, monitoring targets for partners have been increased and WFP has introduced a new monitoring activity, partner monitoring of suspicious shops with transactions and behaviour of concern. WFP and partner teams will conduct phone calls to beneficiaries redeeming in suspicious shops to inquire about the shops’ practices. Furthermore, partners will now report monthly on shop and distribution activities but only quarterly on household visits in line with WFP’s revised reporting requirements.

During the reporting period, efforts were also made to improve the quality of data collected by partners. In addition to training sessions and joint field monitoring activities at the sub-office level, detailed guidelines on how to use each of the monitoring tools is being developed to serve as a reference partners.
WFP revises targets and funding following RRP6 Mid-Year Review

During an Inter-Agency Task Force meeting on 12 June, humanitarian actors in Jordan agreed to reduce planning figures for the RRP6 Mid-Year Review from 800,000 refugees to 700,000 - 150,000 refugees in camps and 550,000 in communities. WFP has revised all planning figures and budgets accordingly, and will target —through vulnerability targeting— 645,000 refugees with food assistance by the end of 2014, down from 710,000 refugees. Vulnerability targeting is planned to commence at the end of Ramadan.

To underline the dire funding situation in Jordan for all agencies, WFP co-hosted an inter-agency donor briefing with UNHCR, WFP and the INGO forum (an inter-sector forum of some 15 NGOs) on 17 June. The food security sector, which WFP co-leads with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO), is one of the most underfunded sectors in the Jordan refugee response, having received 25 percent of the funding requested in the RRP6. Thus far, due to internal advance mechanisms and a lower than expected number of refugees in the country, WFP has been able to provide consistent monthly food assistance to all registered Syrian refugees without a pipeline break or any reductions in food rations or the voucher value.

E-card distributions completed in Mafraq governorate

As part of the e-card programme roll-out, WFP has completed e-card distributions in Mafraq - the governorate with the third highest concentration of non-camp Syrian refugees in Jordan – and began distributions in the Qwaismeh district of Amman and in Madaba on 22 June. With the addition of UNOPS staff, WFP has increased the daily caseload to around 500 households per day per distribution, reaching around 30,000 households monthly. As a result, WFP expects to finish the rollout by the end of next month.

Nutrition programmes for children continue during summer months

In an effort to increase enrolment and student concentration, WFP began school feeding distributions for informal schools run by NRC and Relief International in Azraq camp on 8 June, reaching 512 students with date bars during the reporting period. These informal schools enable children who missed school due to the conflict in Syria to catch up before the regular school year begins in September. While the normal school year has ended in Jordan, NRC and Relief International continue to distribute date bars for summer courses in both Al Za’atri and Azraq camps until schools reopen.
According to Deputy Prime Minister, Beşir Atalay, the number of Syrians taking refuge in Turkey has surpassed one million. In addition to the ongoing inflow of Syrians into Turkey, there are concerns that the rapidly-changing situation in neighbouring Iraq could result in another influx of refugees. The Disaster and Emergency Management Agency of the Government of Turkey, (AFAD), announced that the total number of Syrians registered in 22 camps in 10 provinces is 219,167. WFP and the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) expanded the e-food programme at the beginning of June to cover 100 percent of the population for which the Government of Turkey requested assistance, totalling 217,000 Syrians in 21 camps.

**WFP and TRC work to sustain the value of the food entitlement**

The Turkish lira is susceptible to fluctuations that mirror the political and economic situation in the country, and in the surrounding region. Changes in the value of the national currency could potentially adversely affect the purchasing power of beneficiaries’ food entitlement. Current dependence on regional energy sources, further exacerbated by the deteriorating situation in neighbouring Iraq, makes the lira particularly vulnerable to changing global liquidity conditions. Moreover, present high inflation, in conjunction with an ongoing and aggressive drought has led to the increased prices of staple food commodities throughout Turkey.

The price of Arabic bread is a pervasive issue throughout the camps; prices in some contracted shops tend to be higher than non-contracted shops in city centres. Consequently, AFAD and camp management in some camps have encouraged camp residents to purchase bread in the city; the initiative has successfully sparked competition and decreased prices inside camp markets.

WFP’s June Price Analysis provided both evidence of the gains resulting from WFP’s efforts as well as areas where the programme can be increasingly strengthened. The efforts of WFP field staff to harmonize the prices in contracted and non-contracted shops were largely successful and reductions in prices of staple commodities, where they previously surpassed the average, were reported in ten camps. The greatest improvement in pricing is recorded in Midyat camp, following the establishment of a price committee.

Looking forward, WFP endeavours to:

- increase the number of contracted shops outside of camps, in order to encourage market competition;
- advocate for increased availability of staple commodities of varying prices, package quantity and quality in all participating shops;
- work with AFAD to encourage and participate in the establishment and strengthening of price committees;
- and continue negotiations with shop owners to reduce product prices and increase beneficiary buying power.
OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS

Refugees registered and awaiting registration*: 225,475
Reached in May: 107,297
Plan for June: 111,000

* UNHCR registration figures
**Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR manifest
Reconciliation of figures ongoing.

IRAQ

Assistance to Syrian refugees continues amid growing insecurity

An attack by ISIL forces across northern and eastern Iraq has led to a surge of IDPs entering the Kurdistan Region, with an estimated 300,000 people fleeing to Kurdistan from Mosul alone. As displaced families find refuge in towns and cities across Kurdistan, there is mounting pressure on host communities hosting already hosting over 120,000 Syrian refugees.

The recent fall of the oil refinery in Beiji has led to fuel shortages in the Kurdistan Region. In view of the close proximity of some camps to security operations, WFP welcomes the enhanced security controls at check-points to ensure that there is no spill-over into Kurdistan Region where the situation remains calm. Although the level of risk remains low for staff in Dohuk, WFP continues to monitor and assess the security situation prior to travel between Erbil and Dohuk, given the proximity of both cities to conflict areas. The military operations to counter attacks from ISIL forces across Iraq continue to make the delivery of commodities to Al Obaidi camp in Anbar governorate challenging. WFP is exploring ways to deliver an additional supply of food parcels for the Syrian refugees in the camp.

Despite these developments, WFP continued its assistance to Syrian refugees. The distribution of vouchers in Domiz camp in June was completed on 22 June targeting 72,175 Syrian refugees and injecting over US$2.2 million into the local economy. WFP food assistance to Syrian refugees in eight other camps across the Kurdistan Region, amounting to almost 30 percent of WFP’s overall caseload, is facing a pipeline break due to recent changes and enhanced laboratory testing requirements for the importation of food commodities. As a result, thus far in June, with the exception of voucher assistance in Domiz, in-kind food assistance has only been distributed in Al Obaidi and Gawilan camps. In Akre camp, beneficiaries received two-week rations at the beginning of June. WFP is currently exploring other options, including local procurement, to ensure that food assistance reaches beneficiaries in a timely manner.

Syrians wait to cross as border remains closed

The border at Fishkhabour, between Dohuk governorate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Al-Hasakeh governorate in Syria, remains open on the Iraqi side but closed on the Syrian side. 800 – 1000 people are believed to be waiting in Syria to cross into Iraq since April 2014. Due to lack of access to the Syrian side of the border, verification of the number of families waiting to cross and an assessment of their needs is currently not possible.

Participating shops remain well stocked ahead of Ramadan

WFP conducted on-site monitoring of all three participating shops in Domiz in order to ensure that commodities are well stocked, particularly prior to the start of Ramadan. Monitoring showed that the shops have sufficient stocks to cover the needs of refugees for the month of June. So far, no break in supply chain is anticipated and close monitoring will continue to ensure the availability of food supplies. Government authorities also conduct regular inspection of the quality and price of the commodities at the shop level and commodity prices have remained stable.
**OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS**

Registered refugees*: 138,086  
Reached in May: 99,739  
Plan for June**: 114,700

* UNHCR data:  
http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=8  
** Operational planning figures are based on UNHCR and UNWRA manifest.  
Reconciliation of figures ongoing.

Refugees from Syria. Over half of this caseload, around 68,000 beneficiaries, have received e-cards which have already been remotely uploaded and can be redeemed in Carrefour branches until 3 July.

WFP and UNHCR review distribution lists to improve planning

Since many Syrian refugees leave Egypt, WFP and UNHCR have begun reviewing their refugee and beneficiary lists, removing families who have not attended two consecutive distributions. This will help WFP to better align planning figures, allowing for more accurate monthly plans. Thus far, WFP 4,500 beneficiaries have been removed from distribution lists after two consecutive "no shows" during April and May distribution cycles in Alexandria and Damietta. WFP and UNHCR have clearly communicated this message to beneficiaries and monitoring results indicate that households are aware of the ongoing exercise. In Greater Cairo, the same process will be applied for the preparation of the July cycle, with beneficiaries who did not redeem their e-cards after two consecutive distributions, May and June respectively, to be removed from WFP's distribution lists.

WFP uses social media to enhance communication with beneficiaries

WFP Egypt recently launched a new Facebook page on its food assistance to Syrian refugees with the aim of enhancing communication between WFP and beneficiaries. WFP will post messages on distribution dates, changes to distribution sites and any other key operational information for beneficiaries to access. The new Facebook page will also serve as a channel through which beneficiaries can reach WFP with queries, questions or feedback. The new page received over 500 likes within 24 hours of its launch on 15 June and beneficiaries have already started posting queries. Thus far almost 5,000 people have begun following the page and WFP has designated staff to respond to queries and feedback.

Vulnerability assessment questionnaire finalized

In view of the planned shift from geographical to vulnerability targeting, WFP/UNHCR have finalized the multi-sector household-level vulnerability assessment questionnaire. The first of three three-day trainings for some 100 enumerators started on 17 June and included training modules developed jointly by UNHCR, WFP and Save the Children. In view of Ramadan, the start of data collection has been postponed to mid-July, in order to ensure reliability of information on food consumption and coping mechanisms. Validation of the vulnerability criteria and analysis of first results is expected to start in September.

Beneficiaries in new Tanta distribution sites express satisfaction with distribution process

On-site monitoring and post-distribution monitoring interviews were conducted among beneficiaries of the new distribution site in Tanta. Qualitative results indicate that beneficiaries are overall satisfied with the site location and the distribution process. Results also indicate that the majority of interviewed beneficiaries mainly rely on assistance from humanitarian organizations, as well as on occasional support from relative(s) or friend(s) to obtain food. All interviewed households confirmed a clear understanding of the food voucher programme and its key components.
During the reporting period, WFP received on site monitoring results on WFP’s April distribution process. In total, 18 distributions were monitored in four different distribution sites, including Alexandria, Damietta and two sites in Cairo. Initial results indicate that 16 distributions began on time, while only two (in Cairo) started later than planned. At all sites, beneficiaries indicated that waiting times were suitable (not too long or too short). Furthermore, beneficiaries indicated that all distribution sites had preferential distribution arrangements for vulnerable persons including elderly, pregnant and disabled, as sites facilitate their access and priority in waiting lines.

WFP currently needs **US$275 million** to fund its operations in support of 4.25 million people in Syria and 2.47 million people in the neighbouring countries for the next three months (July – September 2014). Of this, US$16 million is required to support operations in Syria, while US$259 is required for operations in the region. A total of US$736 million is still required to support operations until the end of the year.
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, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, the United States and private donors.

Donors are represented in alphabetical order.

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

Gerald Bourke
Operational Information Management
Mobile: +962 (0) 798693094
E-Mail: gerald.bourke@wfp.org

Louise Gentzel
Senior Information Officer
Mobile: +962 (0) 798651562
E-Mail: louise.gentzel@wfp.org