

## syria regional crisis response update



a biweekly update for unrwa donors

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More than half a million Palestine refugees are directly affected by the conflict in Syria. The UNRWA response aims to preserve refugees' resilience through the continuation of UNRWA services and humanitarian assistance. For a more detailed overview, see the Agency's 2014 Syria regional crisis response [here](#). This biweekly update covers UNRWA efforts from 1 to 15 October.

### highlights

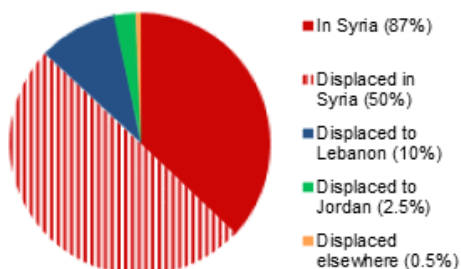
The first refugee youth protection conference in the Middle East was held in Sharjah, with Deputy Commissioner-General Margot Ellis [speaking on the importance of education and stable services](#) for protection. UNRWA expertise in this area, built up in the course of 65-years of experience, was well reported in the Gulf News.

UNRWA highlights with serious concern the significant decline in the quantity of food and other essential items that the Agency has been able to offer to Yarmouk's civilians since the end of July this year. During the reporting period, UNRWA distributed food parcels to only 430 families, hygiene kits to 135 families and provided health services to 264 patients in Yarmouk. It is acknowledged that in several instances, the distribution of aid in Yarmouk has been interrupted or proved impossible on account of exchanges of gunfire and insecurity. However, these instances do not fully account for the low number of civilians UNRWA is presently able to support inside Yarmouk.

### regional overview

Of the 17 United Nations staff killed in Syria as a result of the conflict, 14 are UNRWA staff. Twenty-six UNRWA staff are currently detained or missing. Twenty-six UNRWA staff have been injured during the course of the conflict.

**Displacement.** Of approximately 540,000 Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Syria, over 50 per cent are estimated to have been displaced within Syria, with a further 12 per cent to neighbouring countries. In Lebanon, 45,000 Palestine refugees from Syria have been recorded with UNRWA; in Jordan 14,642 and in Gaza 860 have approached UNRWA for assistance. The Agency also received reports of around 4,000 Palestine refugees in Egypt and smaller numbers in Libya, Turkey and East Asia.



**Funding.** The total pledged amount against the 2014 Response Plan stands at \$197.7 million, including \$33.8 million pledged in 2013 for implementation in 2014. This amount is equivalent to 47 per cent of the total budget of the 2014

**Inter-agency.** A preview document of the regional Refugee Resilience Response Plan (3RP), which also covers UNRWA operations in Lebanon and Jordan, has been prepared for the Berlin donor conference this Tuesday. This preview is intended to foreshadow the content of the 3RP, including a reference to sector shifts and a country synopsis. A next milestone is supporting the development of the country chapters, which should be finalized by mid-November.

**Media.** The first UNHCR-organized MENA refugee youth conference was held in Sharjah. UNRWA Deputy Commissioner-General Margot Ellis spoke on the importance of education and stable social services as a key method of protection for children in crisis situations.

There was wide coverage of Asylum seekers being forced to take perilous journeys, with articles reporting that 165,000 asylum seekers have crossed the Mediterranean to take refuge in Europe since December 2013; half are estimated to be from Syria and Eritrea. Amongst them is a large number of Palestine refugees, but it is difficult to ascertain numbers. Over 3,000 Asylum seekers have drowned in 2014 so far.

## syria

Approximately 540,000 Palestine refugees are registered in Syria. Of these, around 270,000 have been displaced inside Syria and over 70,000 to other countries. Sixteen UNRWA installations across Syria house 6,164 internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom nine per cent are Syrians. A further 4,631 Palestinians are sheltering in other UNRWA-managed installations.

**Yarmouk.** During the reporting period, UNRWA distributed food parcels to only 430 families, hygiene kits to 135 families and provided health services to 264 patients in Yarmouk. There are approximately 1,500 students in Yarmouk, and the UNRWA team also distributed text books and stationery for Grades 1-9. UNRWA is vigorously pursuing the access issue with concerned authorities and urging a restoration of the levels of daily authorization, facilitation and support that made it possible for UNRWA to reach over 1,000 civilian families inside Yarmouk on some distribution days earlier this year. UNRWA is also maintaining its efforts with the concerned authorities to restore the supply of clean, pipe-borne water inside Yarmouk.

Area	Name	Access from outside	Description
Damascus	Jaramana (official camp)	Accessible	Reports from Jaramana town suggested that the situation remains very tense. A health centre is operational, three schools house IDPs and three alternative schools provide classes for UNRWA students.
	Khan Danoun (official camp)	Accessible	Sporadic clashes take place in surrounding areas. A health centre remains operational, staffed by local colleagues. Two schools house IDPs. One alternative school is used to provide classes for UNRWA students.
	Khan Eshieh (official camp)	Not accessible	The camp itself is reported to be calm, but hostilities in the surrounding areas have made the camp inaccessible. The last distribution inside the camp took place in August 2013. Although residents are allowed out of the camp to receive food distributions, they are not allowed to bring anything back into the camp. National UNRWA staff have kept one health centre and one health point open. One UNRWA school houses IDPs and classes are provided for students in two alternative schools.
	Qabr Essit (official camp)	Accessible	Qabr Essit has remains calm. An agreement has been made to clear rubble from the camp and installations continue to be prepared for use.
	Sbeineh (official camp)	Not accessible	It is assumed that the vast majority of Palestine refugees have left the camp, none have so far been permitted to return, and all facilities remain closed.
	Yarmouk (unofficial camp)	Not accessible	Yarmouk experiences regular clashes and shelling which have disrupted distribution. Access remains heavily limited.
Central area	Hama (official camp)	Accessible	The camp has remained calm and all facilities are operational.
	Homs (official camp)	Accessible	The camp has remained calm and all facilities are operational.
	Lattakia (unofficial camp)	Accessible	The camp has remained calm and all facilities are operational.
North area	Ein el Tal (unofficial)	Not accessible	The camp remains abandoned, since residents were forcibly displaced by armed groups in April

	camp) Neirab (official camp)	Accessible	2013, and access remains blocked. The camp has remained relatively calm and all facilities are operational.
South area	Dera'a (official camp)	Not accessible	Very few civilians remain in the camp. The camp has seen sporadic incidents and the immediate vicinity continues to experience armed conflict. UNRWA facilities are operational.

## humanitarian response

**Education** The new school year commenced on 14 September. At present, 48,299 children are enrolled in 88 UNRWA and UNRWA-run schools. In light of the on-going violence, psychosocial support is becoming a primary need across all UNRWA education services in Syria. For this reason, psychosocial support continues to be provided to students at schools. During the reporting period, nine recreational spaces have been completed inside schools, providing children with a place to engage in activities within the school grounds. UNRWA was furthermore able to distribute school textbooks to 1,512 students identified in Yarmouk, for Grades 1-9.

**Health** Since opening in late July, the new temporary health point on the edge of Yarmouk has continued to provide primary health care to refugees from Yarmouk. A total of 4,912 refugees received primary healthcare through this health point, including 756 during the reporting period. The infectious disease surveillance system continues to monitor for any new outbreaks following the typhoid outbreak in July. Recent data has revealed no new cases of typhoid over the past two weeks, but an increased number of cases of diarrhoea have been reported. The health centres will be providing polio vaccines during the immunization week starting 19 October, 2014. In total, 14 primary health centres and 10 health points are currently operational in Damascus, Aleppo, Dera'a, Hama, Homs and Latakia.

**Emergency Relief** The third round of cash distribution took place over the course of September into early October. So far, over the course of this round, over 308,000 beneficiaries have received cash assistance. The fourth round of distribution of food and non-food items – targeting more than 440,000 refugees – has so far delivered food parcels to 12,600 families in Damascus. A further 2,508 packets of diapers, 1,046 hygiene kits, 12 mattresses and 12 blankets have been distributed to displaced refugees in collective shelters and those living with host families. During the reporting period, 735 hygiene kits and 895 food parcels have been distributed to beneficiaries in Yarmouk. Access was not possible for 12 days in the same period, limiting the Agency's ability to provide food and NFIs to refugees in the besieged area.

**Infrastructure and Camp Improvement** Emergency reconstruction, including the restoration of UNRWA services, continues in the Qabr Essit camp in Damascus. Examples of other ongoing activities are maintenance works for a pumping station and renovation of a health center in Khan Dannoun. In Hama camp, two schools, Amqa school and Kweikwat school, are currently undergoing reconstruction. In Latakia, expansion of a Women's Programme Centre remains underway, as well as the renovation of sanitation facilities in Jaba'a Atleet school. Other maintenance and renovation works of installations including health centres and schools are taking place in Homs, Jaramana and Neirab camps.

**Vocational Training** UNRWA continues to provide vocational training to young Palestine refugees, including courses on computer skills, entrepreneurship and community initiatives. Eighty small start-ups are currently operational, and a further 188 potential entrepreneurs have been provided with support in developing business plans. A new vocational training centre in Homs now provides courses to 113 students, with plans to open a new centre in Latakia. Employment is still extremely difficult for young refugees, and only 16 per cent of those who have registered as job seekers in the past year are currently in employment. In order to provide the best possible vocational training, the Agency is committed to continuously improve and build on the skills of its vocational staff. During this reporting period, all Damascus Training Centre (DTC) staff received training to improve communications between staff and students of the Training Centre.

## Lebanon

In July, UNRWA conducted a comprehensive vulnerability needs assessment together with WFP of all Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) recorded with the Agency in Lebanon, to facilitate better planning and use of resources. Results and follow up indicate that there are around 45,000 PRS individuals in Lebanon.

**Emergency relief assistance.** In September, the ATM cards of 42,000 beneficiaries were credited. The monthly assistance is \$30 per person for food and \$100 per family for housing. The total cash assistance for September was \$1.19 million for housing and \$1.25 million for food. From October, assistance will be vulnerability-based. Ineligible families were notified in September and given the opportunity to appeal. As the winter draws near, UNRWA is working to mobilize resources for winterization assistance, partnering with UNICEF for winter clothing for children throughout Lebanon and with ICRC for heating fuel in the Beqaa valley and those living above 500 metres. UNRWA is urgently seeking the help of its donors for the amount of \$1.8 million to meet the needs of the remaining PRS families across Lebanon who are at risk this winter.

**Protection, legal status and advice.** Restrictions imposed by the Government of Lebanon in early May 2014 continue to deny entry to PRS fleeing Syria for safety in Lebanon, including many seeking unification with family already in Lebanon. Even PRS passing through Lebanon or entering for embassy appointments in Beirut face obstacles at the border. On 25 September, the General Security Office announced that PRS with expired visas should approach GSO centres to renew their visas free of charge. According to the circular, PRS who entered Lebanon legally and irregularly who possess official identification documents will be granted temporary residency for a period of three months, free of charge and for one time only. The

statement was issued 10 days after the issuance of a similar announcement concerning Syrian refugees in Lebanon, following advocacy by UNRWA with the Lebanese authorities. PRS who remained in Lebanon for a second year irregularly have been able to leave Lebanon without having to pay the \$200 visa renewal fee, even if no official communication was issued to this effect. Reportedly, similar to Syrian refugees, PRS benefiting from this waiver are banned from re-entering Lebanon for up to six months.

**Health.** UNRWA covers the cost of primary health care for PRS, including medical consultations and medication through 27 health centres throughout the country. The health programme is also covering the costs of secondary, and contributing towards tertiary hospitalization for emergency and life-threatening conditions. Additionally, UNRWA provides financial support for Emergency Room Services at Palestine Red Crescent Society hospitals and partially covers these services at UNRWA-contracted hospitals.

**Education.** UNRWA welcomed students back to school on 8 September and students in grades 1-12 received back-to-school kits, generously funded by the EU and UNICEF. About 6,500 PRS students have enrolled in 60 UNRWA schools for the 2014-2015 school year in Lebanon. UNRWA successfully merged classes in six of fourteen schools, so PRS students will join their PRL classmates in regular morning classes. UNRWA undertook the recruitment of additional PRS teachers to support the increased number of students and to provide supplementary services. Following a recent decision by the Lebanese Ministry of Education, a number of PRL students previously enrolled in government institutions may have to transfer to UNRWA schools. UNRWA is reviewing the potential impact of this decision on its operations.

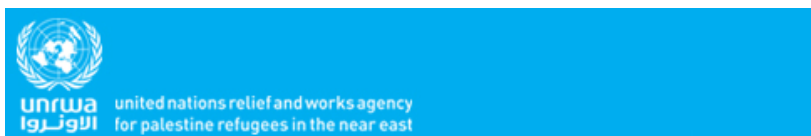
## Jordan

In Jordan, 14,642 PRS and their families have approached UNRWA, an increase of 21 since the last reporting period (30 September). Most PRS in Jordan live in poverty and their precarious legal status creates difficulties for civil processes, access to services and employment. Along with 169 Syrians, 201 PRS are held in Cyber City, a government-appointed facility near Ramtha.

**Education** Class formation for the 2014/15 school year has almost been completed. As of 30 September, 2,317 children were enrolled, including 183 new enrolments. Children enrolled include 994 PRS and 1,323 Syrian children. Updated enrolment figures will be available at the end of October. While in previous years, admission to UNRWA schools had been open also to Syrian children, for this school year, UNRWA has had to limit new enrolments to PRS children only. The Agency has been unable to accommodate approximately 800 Syrian children who require access to education due to critical funding shortfalls. UNRWA is working with its partners – including the government, other United Nations agencies and donors – to see how it can assist. Based on 2013/14 figures, an estimated 85 per cent of PRS children are enrolled, 54 per cent of whom are girls.

**Health** UNRWA continues to provide PRS with free primary health care in its 24 clinics across the country, as well as hospital referrals for emergency and life-saving care with almost full coverage. In the first half of October 2014, PRS received approximately 545 consultations at UNRWA health clinics. Overall, PRS have good access to health care, with 98 per cent reporting they receive medical care when they need it.

**Emergency relief** No new cash assistance was distributed in the first half of October. As of September, distribution of NFIs is complete for 2014.



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