



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Lebanon | Situation Report

March 2024

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The [third Integrated Food Insecurity Phase Classification \(IPC\) analysis](#) conducted in October 2023, projected an improvement in the food security situation in Lebanon - from 25 percent food insecure people in October 2023 to 19 percent in March 2024. The stable, yet fragile, economy and increased coverage of humanitarian assistance throughout the year were the key contributing factors to these improvements. However, the IPC analysis also highlighted that persistent multiple crises and projected decline in humanitarian assistance are likely to worsen the situation. It is expected that 21 percent or more of the population will experience high food insecurity from April to September 2024.

Moreover, public sentiment against Syrian refugees and demands for their return to Syria increased in recent months, potentially impacting social cohesion.

In 2024, WFP remains focused on the response to Lebanon's economic, refugee, and the South conflict crises. In March, WFP supported around 900,000 Syrian refugees and over 600,000 Lebanese nationals to meet their essential food and other basic needs. However, based on a retargeting exercise and due to funding constraints, WFP has reduced cash assistance to Syrian refugees by 30 percent since December 2023. Meanwhile, since January 2024, WFP has stopped in-kind food assistance to 50 percent of previously assisted Lebanese households.

Due to the lack of available resources and in coordination with the Ministry of Social Affairs, WFP started reducing the frequency of cash transfers to all Lebanese beneficiaries under the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) in February 2024, thereby reducing the cash transfer value by 44 percent.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

	% Funded	Available	Required
Country Strategic Plan (2023-2025)	22%	US\$ 697 M	US\$ 3.1 B
2024 Total Requirements	22%	US\$ 211 M	US\$ 960 M
Net Funding Requirements (Apr 2024 – Sep 2024) US\$ 256.7 M			

IN NUMBERS



2.5 M
people in need of food assistance

Food Security and Agriculture Sector, 2024



1.49 M
people assisted in March 2024



US\$ 12.3 M
cash-based transfers made



1,560 MT
(US\$ 2.5M) of food distributed

SITUATION UPDATE

The monthly cost of the full Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) monitored by WFP increased by 5 percent between January and February 2024, to reach LBP 36.4 million (US\$ 403) for a family of five. This was mainly due to a 21 percent increase in the cost of rent observed during the last quarter of 2023. The cost of the food basket alone remained unchanged for the same period at LBP 3.1 million (US\$ 34.4) per person per month.

HIGHLIGHT: WFP RESPONSE IN SOUTH LEBANON

Since the onset of the conflict at the southern border, over 93,000 individuals have been internally displaced. 1,500 individuals are currently residing in shelters, while the rest are staying with families in secondary residences or sub-par dwellings improvised as shelters. Security challenges in the South also led to the closure of 50 public schools affecting more than 10,000 enrolled students.

In addition to its regular activities in the South, in March WFP supported some 13,400 people affected by the conflict, reaching a total of 146,600 individuals since October 2023. In March, WFP distributed one-off in-kind food parcels to 3,300 affected Lebanese people, with each parcel covering the basic food needs of one person for one month. Additionally, WFP provided daily in-school snacks to 10,100 affected students in 11 additional schools.

WFP RESPONSE

Cash Assistance for Refugees

In March, **WFP provided cash assistance to 830,500 refugees** who can redeem their assistance at ATMs, money transfer agents, and/or shops contracted by WFP.

Due to funding shortfalls, WFP will stop providing food e-card assistance to 165,000 people from May onwards. Cash Assistance for Syrian refugees will be further scaled down resulting in a 37 percent reduction from November 2023.

Economic Crisis Response for Lebanese

In March, WFP reached 145,500 Lebanese individuals (35,700 households) with in-kind food parcels. In April, WFP will launch the second phase of the retargeting exercise aimed at assessing the vulnerability of 13,000 households to determine their eligibility to continue receiving in-kind food assistance.

School Meals

Through its school meals programme, WFP reached 104,300 students in 190 public schools, out of which 92,600 received snacks and 11,700 students received cold meals. These meals were prepared by 104 women volunteering at nine school kitchens.

In March, WFP finalized a series of 18 training sessions for health educators, supervisors, and directors on the use of a new digital system developed by WFP. The system is to be used by public schools for tracking the orders and deliveries of snacks from the suppliers, to significantly improve data accuracy and accessibility. The tool is now successfully used by all 432 trained school staff in 163 schools.

Support to Social Protection Programmes*

Following the reduced frequency of NPTP assistance which now occurs every other month, cash assistance was not provided in March 2024. In coordination with the Government of Lebanon (GoL), WFP continued to carry out the recertification exercise which started in January 2024. By the end of March, WFP had visited 92 percent of the 35,800 prioritized households to assess their eligibility to continue receiving NPTP cash assistance, with plans to complete this exercise by the end of April 2024.

After delivering the final Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) cash entitlements for Lebanese people from the initial tranche of the World Bank loan in February, WFP is finalizing the extension agreement with the GoL to resume service provision of the second phase of the ESSN cash transfers, aiming to progressively reach 700,000 Lebanese people (160,000 households) in 2024.

Livelihoods

WFP held a successful trade show in Zahle City, bringing together contracted shop retailers, Food System Challenge-supported suppliers, cooperatives, and local businesses. The event, which serves as a networking platform helped establish long-term business relationships between retailers and suppliers, resulting in new contacts for both parties.

Nutrition

WFP, alongside Lebanon's nutrition experts, participated in a two-day workshop in March to validate data from the first national Integrated Micronutrient Survey (LIMA), assessing nutrition and micronutrient status of pre-school children, adolescents, and women in Lebanon, along with infant and young child feeding practices, and anemia causes. Results are expected to be disseminated by the end of May 2024 to help inform WFP's food fortification plans.

GENDER & SOCIAL INCLUSION, PROTECTION & ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

The WFP call center received 32,200 claims in March, compared to 44,700 in February 2024. 94 percent of these claims were addressed and closed in the same month.

In March, 27 percent of the claimants requested WFP assistance, 21 percent of the calls were related to programmes, 8 percent requested to update their personal data, 1 percent of the calls were protection-related, and 43 percent requested information on other topics. All protection-related claims were referred to relevant partners for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), child protection, threats, health, legal counseling, and shelter.

On 8 March, WFP Lebanon commemorated International Women's Day by hosting a staff event featuring a panel discussion with four academic experts, aiming to highlight women's experiences in displacement while exploring avenues for gaining empowerment and support. WFP Lebanon also marked the day with a video filmed at a cooperative in Fnaidek featuring the head of the cooperative, Fadwa, who spoke about empowering women and women-led businesses. Watch [here](#). Moreover, in March, WFP's assistance reached 56,159 people with disabilities.

MONITORING & ASSESSMENTS

WFP's on-site post-distribution monitoring of cash redemption points in February 2024 showed acceptable waiting time for Syrian refugees and Lebanese at both ATMs and Money Transfer Operators (MTOs). Additionally, one percent of Syrian refugees reported facing issues at the redemption points including general harassment or pushing

From October 2023 to February 2024, satisfaction with the transfer value of the food e-card cash assistance provided to Syrian refugees notably decreased from 7.2 to 6.1 out of 10. Dissatisfied individuals mentioned that the value of assistance is not enough to afford food.

KEY CHALLENGES

WFP continues to face challenges in sustaining regular emergency programmes for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese at a proper scale while maintaining its additional response in the South. Without additional funding, the number of assisted refugee and Lebanese families would be further reduced, exacerbating the crisis even further.

* The NPTP is funded by WFP donors and the ESSN programme is funded through a World Bank loan to the Government of Lebanon, with WFP implementing cash transfers as a service provider.



FOOD SECURITY & AGRICULTURE SECTOR

In February, WFP and 21 sector partners reached 1.6 million refugees and Lebanese people through cash and in-kind food assistance. The estimated amount of cash disbursed was US\$ 18.8 million, while around 9,500 people were provided with ready-to-eat meals and partial food parcels. In addition, 3,550 farmers and 1 agricultural cooperative were supported through capacity building and inputs and assets provision. The estimated amount of cash disbursed for small-scale farmers to enhance agricultural production was US\$ 616,200.

As of the end of March, WFP, with 27 sector partners, distributed more than 479,600 daily meals and 25,500 food parcels to displaced people affected by the conflict in the South, and provided one-time cash assistance to more than 35,000 affected households; in addition to 150 farmers whose agricultural livelihoods were impacted by the conflict.

ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

On her first field visit as WFP's new Assistant Executive Director (AED) Partnerships and Innovation, Ms. Rania Dagash visited Lebanon where she met with beneficiaries receiving WFP assistance, along with donors to contribute to the country office's advocacy efforts.

On 4 March, WFP, the Director of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, Alessandra Piermattei, and the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Abbas Halabi, visited schools supported by the school meals programme where they announced Italy's recent contribution to the programme (read more [here](#)).

Also in March, WFP, the Middle East and Africa Division Director at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Alex Stephens, and a team from the Australian Embassy visited Lebanese and Syrian refugee households supported by WFP's cash assistance, to observe the impact of Australia's contribution confirmed at the beginning of 2024 (read more [here](#)).

Donors

Australia, Canada, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon's Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Switzerland, USA

WFP CASH & IN-KIND ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES AND LEBANESE - MARCH 2024

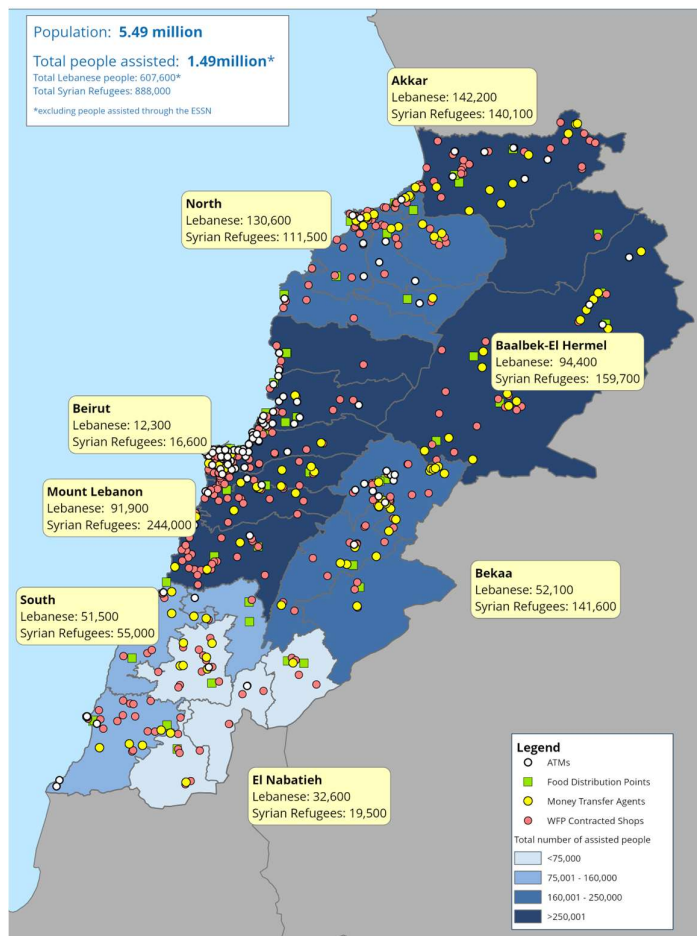


Photo: Fouzeyya, a Lebanese woman benefits from WFP's in-kind food assistance

STORY WORTH TELLING

Fouzeyya, a 45-year-old woman, shares a humble apartment with her sister. To contribute to their family's expenses, Fouzeyya works in agricultural work, earning a daily wage equivalent to approximately 130,000 LBP, which is less than US\$ 2. Occasionally, her sister also takes on work to assist with the costs of electricity and medication. However, when it comes to food, the sisters heavily depend on food parcels provided by the World Food Programme (WFP).

Before 2020, Fouzeyya and her siblings were self-sufficient and didn't require assistance. However, in the wake of the pandemic and economic downturn, and following Fouzeyya's loss of employment, she reached out to the WFP hotline and registered herself and her brother for support. "My sister and I heavily rely on these food parcels as they enable us to make ends meet month after month. Without them, I fear we would often go to bed hungry," she expresses.