

Situation Report 9 – September 2023

Highlights

- WFP assisted 3.2 million people across Syria in September, including 380,700 people through cash-based transfers worth US\$ 3.7 million.
- The national average price of WFP's food basket increased by 13 percent in September compared to August. Food prices doubled compared to January 2023, and nearly tripled within a year.
- Cross-border operations to north-west Syria via the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing with Türkiye resumed on 19 September.
- Despite the reduction of assistance in July, WFP's operations will be facing pipeline breaks in January due to funding shortfalls and the increasing import lead time in Syria, which might lead to further reduction of assistance and the redesign of the general food assistance programme.

In Numbers



3.2 million people in Syria received WFP assistance in September 2023.



6.8 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs), according to the 2023 Humanitarian Needs overview ([HNO](#)).



12.1 million people are food insecure in Syria ([HNO](#)).



WFP requires a US\$ 134 million to keep the currently reduced level of implementation of general food assistance for the most vulnerable 3.2 million people for the next 6 months.

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Situation Update

- The cost of the WFP's food basket continued to increase in September, reaching around SYP 938,000 (≈ US\$ 110 at the official exchange rate) for a family of five, 13 percent more than the previous month. The cost doubled compared to January 2023, and nearly tripled within 12 months.
- Since the beginning of 2023, the local currency has lost half of its value on the parallel market. This is the highest depreciation of the currency compared to the same period in 2022 and 2021 where the local currency depreciated by 21 percent and 16 percent, respectively. As of September, the Syrian pound traded at 13,436 SYP/USD, a 66 percent depreciation in 12 months and 84 percent in three years.
- Cross-border operations via Bab Al-Hawa border crossing between Türkiye and non-government-controlled parts of northwest Syria resumed on 19 September, following an agreement between the Government of Syria (GoS), the Government of Türkiye, and the UN. Negotiated humanitarian access will remain critical for operations moving forward.

WFP Operations

General Food Assistance (GFA)

- WFP reached 3.2 million people across Syria with in-kind and cash-based general food assistance:
 - WFP distributed 20,000 mt of food to 2.9 million people.
 - A total of 350,000 people received cash-based assistance for a total value of US\$ 3 million.
- WFP provided ready-to-eat rations (RTEs) to 11,500 people displaced by the ongoing in-fighting in Deir Ezzor governorate.
- WFP provided RTEs to 3,700 people in Al-Bab district displaced by the deterioration of the security situation in northern Aleppo governorate.

School Meals

- The 2023-2024 academic year started on 3 September and WFP is gradually resuming its school meals programme.
- WFP provided fresh meals to over 34,000 children in Aleppo governorate in September. In Deir Ezzor governorate, WFP will resume the provision of fresh meals in October.
- WFP plans to resume the distribution of fortified date bars in October with a temporarily reduction of feeding days from 5 to 3 per week due to supply chain challenges with the local production of fortified date bars.
- Out-of-school children enrolled in Curriculum B¹ are being registered and those eligible will receive electronic value vouchers starting in October.

Building Resilience

- In September, WFP supported the establishment of four food processing units in four locations in Deir Ezzor governorate and provided the needed tools, equipment and trainings to 20 women to start their business. WFP also provided tools and equipment to five people in Dar'a governorate to help them expand their food processing business and increase their income.

- Using a corn dryer machine provided by WFP, 4,000 farmers in Deir Ezzor are expected to improve the quality of the corn they produce, through better drying and storage. The machine can dry 5 tons of corn seeds/hour.

Nutrition

- WFP's prevention of acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies interventions reached 108,350 children (6-23 months) and 39,700 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) who received vouchers to purchase food from WFP-contracted shops, for a total value of US\$ 667,000. Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition interventions reached 27,200 children (6-59 months) and PBWGs.
- Insecurity in Al-Hasakeh City, Al-Hasakeh governorate, temporarily disrupted WFP nutrition activities for PBWGs.

Clusters and Common Services

Food Security Sector

- The Food Security Sector reached 4.3 million people with food baskets and another 2.5 million people with bread and wheat flour distribution in September. In addition, the sector's emergency response reached 240,000 people with ready-to-eat rations, cooked meals, and emergency food baskets. The sector has reached 1.8 million people with livelihoods interventions in 2023.

Logistics Cluster

- The Logistics Cluster continued to facilitate the cross-border operation from Türkiye into northwest Syria. In September, the cluster transhipped over 100 trucks carrying 1,230 mt of humanitarian relief items through Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al Salam border crossings on behalf of six UN agencies.

UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

- In September, UNHAS conducted 15 flights from Damascus to Qamishli and Aleppo, transporting 487 passengers and 1.16 mt of light cargo on behalf of 29 humanitarian organizations.

¹ A UNICEF-supported accelerated learning programme that combine two academic years in one, allowing children who missed out on periods of education to catch up with their peers and fill their learning gaps in half the required time.

Funding

- Despite the reduction in the level of assistance since July, WFP's operations will face pipeline breaks in January due to funding shortfalls and the increasing import lead time in Syria (6 months).
- General Food Assistance: WFP Syria urgently requires US\$ 134 million to keep the currently reduced level of implementation for the most vulnerable, 3.2 million people/month, for the next 6 months. Unless funding prospects change, WFP plans a further prioritization of assistance from January together with the redesign of the programme.
- Schools Meals: WFP urgently requires US\$ 4.1 million by November to avoid a pipeline break in the first quarter of 2024.

Monitoring

- WFP and contracted third-party monitoring companies (TPM) conducted 750 on-site monitoring visits and 1,870 post-distribution monitoring interviews across all governorates in Syria.
- WFP received over 13,800 calls through its community feedback mechanism (CFM) helpline, which provides a direct link between WFP and the affected population. Most of the calls received in September were related to the recent reduction of assistance. WFP, at the same time, continued to receive appeals from people affected by the recent changes in assistance

across the country. The collection of appeals will continue until late October.

Operational challenges

- The month of September saw an up-tick of security incidents that disrupted WFP and partner's operations:
 - In Deir Ezzor governorate, WFP operations on the eastern side of the Euphrates River were disrupted for most of September as a result of ongoing hostilities.
 - In Al-Hasakeh governorate, all WFP missions to the city and to Al Hol camp were put on hold as a result of fighting between GoS forces and the National Defense Forces (NDF) in the GoS-controlled 'security square' in Al-Hasakeh city. All activities resumed by the end of September.
 - In northern Aleppo governorate, the escalation in hostilities led to a temporary suspension of a WFP distribution to 8,775 people in Azaz, Jarablus and Afrin for two days. WFP also cancelled two cross-border missions to Azaz and Jarablus due to insecurity.
- More than 21,000 people in the Kurdish-controlled neighborhood of Shaikh Maqsoud in Aleppo have not received their WFP monthly food assistance since January due to a lack of relevant approvals. In September, WFP conducted a second needs assessment mission that noted an increasing number of people in need of humanitarian assistance. WFP continues to advocate for approval while exploring alternative ways to resume assistance.

WFP Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan (2022-2023)

	2023 Requirement (in US\$)	6-Month Net Funding Requirement (October 2023 – March 2024)	People Assisted (September 2023 distributions) *	Female	Male
ICSP (January 2022– December 2023)	1.5 billion	672.9 million	3,244,980		
Activity 1: General Food Assistance			3,219,349	1,667,623	1,551,726
Activity 2: School Feeding			34,050	16,174	17,876
Activity 3: Livelihoods and Resilience			125**	65	60
Activity 4: Prevention of Acute Malnutrition			139,006	83,857	55,149
Activity 5: Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition			27,176	13,960	13,216

* Note that per-activity assistance figures cannot be summed due to overlap between activities. Monthly distribution figures are estimates and subject to change pending final beneficiary reconciliation.

** As part of its livelihoods strategy, WFP is gradually phasing out household-level interventions and focusing more on communal asset rehabilitation. Thus, direct distribution of assistance is now implemented as a complementary activity to communal asset rehabilitation activities and when necessary.