

# Situation Report 12 – December 2023

## Highlights

- WFP assisted 3.5 million people across Syria in December, including 242,000 people through cash-based transfers worth USD 3.3 million.
- The last distribution of the General Food Assistance (GFA) programme took place in December, as the programme will be discontinued across the country amidst funding shortfalls, except for 110,000 people in six camps in north-east Syria. In 2024, WFP will replace it with a smaller, more refined and targeted set of interventions focused on the most severely vulnerable households.
- The living standards for people in Syria declined significantly in 2023, with the cost of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) and food prices more than doubling to reach SYP 2.4 m in December. Families earning a minimum wage can only afford one fifth of their food needs.
- An estimated 80 percent of the Syrian population requires some form of humanitarian assistance in 2024, according to the 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview ([HNO](#)). Approximately 55 percent of the Syrian population, or 12.9 million people, are food insecure of which 3.1 million are severely food insecure.
- WFP Executive Board approved the extension of the [WFP Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan \(ICSP\) 2022-2023](#) for two additional years until end of 2025. WFP adjusted its needs-based plan from USD 1.5 billion in 2023 to USD 1 billion in 2024 to focus on addressing the needs of the severely food insecure people.
- UNHAS operations in Syria resumed on 31 December after having been suspended since 12 October due to repeated airstrikes.

## In Numbers



**3.5 million people in Syria received WFP assistance in December 2023.**



**6.8 million Internally Displaced People (2023 [HNO](#)).**



**12.9 million people are food insecure in Syria (2024 [HNO](#)).**



**3.1 million people are severely food insecure in Syria.**



**WFP requires a USD 479 million for the next 6 months to ensure the implementation of all its activities in Syria.**

## Situation Update

- An estimated 80 percent of the population in Syria, or 16.7 million people, requires some form of humanitarian assistance in 2024, according to the [2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#). Approximately 55 percent of the total population, or 12.9 million people, are food insecure of which 3.1 million are severely food insecure. A further 2.6 million people are at risk of sliding into food insecurity.
- The living standards for people in Syria declined significantly in 2023. The cost of the minimum expenditure basket (MEB) monitored by WFP more than doubled in 2023 to reach SYP 2,400,540 in December. Food prices have also more than doubled, with the price of WFP's reference food basket for a family of five reaching SYP 920,661. At this level, families

earning a minimum wage of SYP 185,940 can only afford one fifth of their food needs.

- By the end of December 2023, the local currency traded at an average of 14,343 SYP/USD on the parallel market, representing a nearly 60 percent depreciation in 2023.

## WFP Operations

### General Food Assistance (GFA)

- WFP reached 3.3 million people across Syria with in-kind and cash-based transfers:
  - WFP distributed 18,553 mt of food to 3.1 million people.
  - A total of 162,100 people received cash-based assistance for a total value of USD 1.7 million.
- In December, WFP received approvals to deliver general food assistance to the Kurdish-controlled neighborhood of Ash-Sheikh Maqsoud in Aleppo and reached 10,750 people with in-kind food rations. This is the first time that WFP is able to distribute food assistance in Ash-Sheikh Maqsoud neighbourhood since January 2023, due to lack of approvals.
- Due to funding shortfalls, the GFA programme ended in December. In 2024, WFP will replace it with a more refined and targeted alternative set of emergency food assistance interventions focused on the most severely vulnerable households. Around 110,000 people living in six camps in north-east Syria will continue to receive assistance until new interventions are launched.

### School Meals

- WFP reached 442,800 children with fortified date bars in 1,500 schools across the country. Furthermore, WFP reached 6,100 children enrolled in self-learning programme in camps in north-east Syria. WFP has temporarily reduced its provision of date bars from 5 to 3 days per week due to supply chain challenges with the local production of fortified date bars.
- WFP provided fresh meals to some 67,700 schoolchildren in Aleppo, Deir Ezzor, and Rural Damascus governorates in December.
- WFP provided cash-based assistance to 32,400 very vulnerable schoolchildren enrolled in Curriculum B across the country, as well as to

460 schoolchildren receiving non-formal education in Dar'a governorate.

### Building Resilience

- WFP completed the rehabilitation of Oyoum Al-Abed irrigation water pumping station in Dar'a governorate. The pumping station will provide water to irrigate 5,000 hectares of agricultural lands between Mzereeb and Tafas towns. The rehabilitation of another pumping station in Dar'a, Al-Harir, is ongoing and expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2024.
- WFP completed the rehabilitation of the remaining two irrigation water pumping stations in Deir Ezzor governorate as part of its plan to rehabilitate six pumping station along the Euphrates. Overall, the project will supply water to irrigate 1,540 hectares of agricultural lands, benefiting around 15,260 farmer households.

### Nutrition

- WFP's prevention of acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies interventions reached 112,000 children (6-23 months) and 47,400 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) who received vouchers to purchase food from WFP-contracted shops. Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition interventions reached 35,900 children (6-59 months) and PBWGs.

## Clusters and Common Services

### Food Security Sector

- The Food Security Sector reached 3.8 million people with regular food baskets and another 6.8 million people with bread and flour distribution for the month of November 2023. In addition, at least 86,247 were reached with emergency response through ready-to-eat rations, cooked meals and emergency food baskets.

### Logistics Cluster

- The Logistics Cluster continued to facilitate the cross-border operation from Türkiye into north-west Syria. In December, the cluster transhipped over 547 trucks carrying 10,562 mt of humanitarian relief items through Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al Salam border crossings on behalf of seven UN agencies.

## UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

- Following the reopening of the Damascus International Airport on 27 December, UNHAS resumed operation as of 31 December and conducted one return flight from Damascus to Qamishli, transporting five passengers and 0.35 mt of light cargo on behalf of five humanitarian organizations.

## Funding

- On 28 December, WFP Executive Board approved the extension of the [WFP Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan \(ICSP\) 2022-2023](#) for two additional years until end of 2025.
- While food insecurity and malnutrition are increasing, WFP has adjusted its needs-based plan from USD 1.5 billion in 2023 to USD 1 billion in 2024 to focus on addressing the needs of the severely food insecure people.
- WFP Syria requires USD 479 million for the next six months (February 2024 – July 2024) across all its activities.

## Monitoring

- WFP and contracted third-party monitoring companies (TPM) conducted over 760 on-site monitoring visits and 1,200 post-distribution monitoring interviews across all governorates in Syria.

- Following WFP's announcement of the end of general food assistance programme in early December, the number of calls received through the community feedback mechanism (CFM) helpline more than doubled compared to November, with over 28,250 cases registered by the end of December (12,830 cases in November). Most of the cases received in December were requests for information about WFP assistance.
- WFP is further enhancing its accountability to affected population in north-west Syria through the establishment of a dedicated CFM helpline. WFP had completed the testing phase of the system, recruited, and trained helpline operators. The helpline is set to be operational in early 2024, following a sensitization campaign to inform the population in north-west Syria.

## Operational challenges

- An escalation in hostilities along the northern border with Türkiye in the last week of December resulted in the suspension of UN cross-border transshipments and missions to north-west Syria between 27 December 2023 and 2 January 2024.

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[WFP.org/Syria](http://WFP.org/Syria)

### WFP Syria Interim Country Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

	2023 Requirement (in USD)	6-Month Net Funding Requirement (February 2024 – July 2024)	People Assisted (December 2023) *	Female	Male
<b>ICSP</b> (January 2022– December 2025)	<b>1.5 billion</b>	<b>479 million</b>	<b>3,479,564</b>		
Activity 1: <b>General Food Assistance</b>			<b>3,269,310</b>	1,693,503	1,575,807
Activity 2: <b>School Feeding</b>			<b>549,454</b>	260,991	260,991
Activity 3: <b>Livelihoods and Resilience</b>			<b>0**</b>	0	0
Activity 4: <b>Prevention of Acute Malnutrition</b>			<b>159,440</b>	102,414	57,026
Activity 5: <b>Treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition</b>			<b>35,890</b>	18,436	17,454

\* 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.