

WFP SYRIA EMERGENCY RESPONSE

External Situation Report

5 February 2025

Highlights

- **WFP Executive Director (ED) visited Syria** from 13 to 15 January, met government stakeholders, members of the diplomatic community, WFP staff, as well as beneficiaries - during a field mission to Rural Damascus. The ED **stressed** that food security is fundamental to ensure national security, and called for collective efforts to address urgent humanitarian needs, while also advancing recovery initiatives.
- **WFP is uniquely equipped to address acute food insecurity, and reduce humanitarian needs through investments in recovery interventions across all of Syria.** Provided enough funding is available, WFP aims to: continue to provide **targeted food and nutrition assistance** to food insecure and vulnerable households; support and stabilize the **recovery of the bread value chain** - from production to consumption; **improve food systems and livelihoods** in key targeted areas; and **build the government's capacity** to establish a national targeted safety net system.
- **WFP urgently requires USD 250 million in the next months to: scale-up emergency response** and deliver food and nutrition assistance to up to 2.8 million people, and **invest in recovery interventions.** Flexible contributions are key to enable WFP to use any assistance modality and any corridor to reach those in need.

IN NUMBERS



Over **1.5 million** people reached on a monthly basis with WFP's regular programmes



Over **1 million** newly displaced people reached with emergency assistance across Syria since September 2024



652,000 people remain displaced since 27 November, in addition to **7.2 million IDPs** (2024 HNO)



Over half of the population is food insecure. Of these, nearly **3 million** people are projected to be **severely food insecure.**



US\$ 250 million of flexible funding urgently needed to scale up emergency response and invest in recovery interventions

needs. While businesses, public services, schools, banks, and markets have gradually resumed operations, social tensions and crime-related incidents increased in recent weeks - impacting women and minority communities the most, including WFP staff. Fighting and unrest persists in the north and northeast of Syria - threatening lives, livelihoods and essential infrastructure. Meanwhile, the Israeli military presence in the south has sparked displacement, fear and protests.

- Since 27 November, **internal displacement** numbers decreased from one million to 652,000 people, this is in addition to 7.2 million already displaced by the prolonged conflict. Meanwhile, UNHCR reports that approximately **500,000 Syrian refugees have returned** from neighbouring countries to date. Initial reports from UNHCR indicate that 27 percent of 3,400 refugees interviewed across the region intend to return home in the next 12 months.
- **Food insecurity in Syria remains one of the major concerns during this transition period** with over half of the population food insecure, including nearly 3 million people projected to be severely food insecure.
- Limited circulation and liquidity of SYP and the open market to foreign currency is likely driving the **appreciation of the Syrian pound (SYP)** on the parallel market (SYP 10,000/USD 1 as of 30 January) - at times trading below the official rate.

SITUATION UPDATE

- Syria's transition remains challenged by **insecurity and social tensions, dynamic population movements, and substantial unmet humanitarian**

WFP RESPONSE

- As one of the UN's largest operational organizations in Syria, **WFP is uniquely equipped to address acute food insecurity, and reduce humanitarian needs through investments in recovery interventions** that address food systems challenges and enable communities to recover and rebuild. To do so, and guided by the humanitarian principles, WFP continues to engage with all relevant parties to ensure access to affected communities and safe movement of staff and supplies.
- **WFP reaches** over 1.5 million people on a monthly basis through targeted food distributions, school meals, nutrition (prevention and treatment), and livelihood support. **In addition, WFP reached over 1 million newly displaced people** since September 2024, with hot meals, fresh meals, date bars, ready-to-eat, food rations and bread. WFP will continue the registration process of vulnerable families for its targeted emergency food assistance, including those newly displaced who meet eligibility criteria.
- **WFP continued to optimize and augment its operational capacities**, using all available corridors to ensure a continuous and cost-efficient supply flow into Syria. This includes increased use of the Turkish corridor further into the centre of the country, alongside the continued use of established corridors from Syrian ports, Jordan and Lebanon. So far, trucks from Syria can access the northeast via Tabqa. WFP is also exploring a new corridor via Iraq for the movement of humanitarian cargo and personnel.
- **WFP is sourcing new food through available open corridors**. Currently WFP has a stock of 116,000 food rations available in country – which covers the needs of 580,000 individuals for one month only – as well as nutrition supplies and 14,668 MT of mixed food commodities – to produce approximately 200,000 food rations.
- **Moving forward, and provided funding is made available, WFP plans to:**
 - **Address urgent food security needs by providing targeted food and nutrition assistance** (food or cash) to up to 2.8 million food-insecure and vulnerable people, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and schoolchildren - including 1.6 million newly displaced people and returnees. In addition, WFP plans to provide blanket subsidized bread to approximately 2 million people for 6 months, in hunger hotspots.
 - **Support and stabilize the recovery of the bread value chain, from production to consumption** - as foundational to food security and social cohesion in Syria. WFP plans to work with caretaker authorities to set-up a National Bread Access Programme (NBAP), which targets the most

vulnerable households based on an enhanced national social registry. At the same time, WFP would continue to restore critical components of the bread chain – such as grain siloes, bakeries, and mills - while supporting the establishment of a national bread fortification programme.

- **Improve food systems, and livelihoods to reduce humanitarian needs**, in areas with high food insecurity and climate vulnerability, as well as areas prioritized for IDP and refugee returns. This would include the rehabilitation of essential community assets, agricultural land, transport and market infrastructure, and the provision of agricultural inputs, machinery and trainings for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) – with a focus on women and youth empowerment.
- **Build the government's capacity to establish a national safety net system**. This would allow the transition of chronically vulnerable humanitarian caseloads into a targeted national safety net, paving the way for long-term economic resilience and stability.

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

- **Humanitarian access** remains a challenge in parts of the northeast, due to heightened insecurity.
- **Controlled and limited access via Türkiye corridor impose unnecessary costs and delays**. Although all border crossings (Bab- Al Hawa, Bab Al Salam and Al Raei) are open for commercial transport, humanitarian cargo and staff are currently not using the Bab al Hawa border following the expiration of the consent-based agreement. The consent for the remaining two borders expires on 13 February and is at risk of non-renewed. The UN, through OCHA, are negotiating for continued access through the three border crossings. In addition, due to security concerns, Turkish trucks are not permitted to enter Syria, requiring WFP to tranship cargo into Syrian trucks. This results in an additional cost of 12 percent at minimum and significant delays.
- While banks have resumed operations, **cash liquidity remains a challenge** as the Central Bank reassesses its monetary policy to control inflation amid current economic pressures. As a result, **cash-based transfers (CBT) in humanitarian programmes are on hold**. Currently, WFP is only able to implement CBT activities in northwest Syria areas; in addition, a pilot is ongoing in Aleppo Governorate to test an alternative delivery mechanism - with potential for future emergency use. WFP will resume CBT as soon as a reliable banking solution is re-established.
- The former Government's **large-scale subsidy** system is facing interruptions across the country, this poses a serious burden on the most vulnerable families in terms of availability and economic accessibility to basic needs. For example, the **price of bread** – a key staple

for Syrian families – increased by over 400 percent per bundle, reaching 4,000 SYP, between November 2024 and January 2025. The full removal of bread subsidy in the coming two months is expected to further increase the cost of bread up to 9,000 SYP per bundle.

- Years of protracted conflict had severely strained markets, social services and banking systems and further jeopardized Syria's fragile economy. The most recent lifting of restrictions on remittances and the use of foreign currency offered some relief to the most vulnerable. However, **sanction relief is needed to allow investments in essential sectors**, facilitating the recovery and stabilization process, while easing humanitarian needs.

FUNDING REQUIREMENT

- Based on current estimates, **WFP urgently requires USD 250 million in coming months to scale up emergency response** and deliver food and nutrition assistance to up to 2.8 million people **and invest in recovery interventions**.
- Flexible contributions are key to enable WFP to use any assistance modality and any corridor to reach those in need.

UN RESPONSE

- The **UN has launched the 'Syria Humanitarian Response Priorities'**, extending the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan. To cover the period from 1 January to 31 March 2025 and valued at USD 1.2 billion, the plan aims to address the most urgent needs of 6.7 million people in areas such as protection, camp IDP management, early recovery and livelihoods, education, food security, health water and sanitation, until more elaborate needs assessment and planning are completed for the rest of 2025.

CLUSTERS AND COMMON SERVICES

Food Security Sector (FSS)

- The **Food Security Sector continued its efforts in enhancing coordination** among partners across all of Syria.
- NGOs that seek to scale up operations in parts of Syria where they were not previously working **are urged to coordinate their work through the FSS** to enable a single comprehensive overview of assistance and minimize gaps and duplication.

Logistics Cluster

- The **Logistics Cluster** is supporting the border crossing transshipment of humanitarian supply carrying commodities from Türkiye into Syria.

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

- The **Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)** supports the humanitarian community and UN Hubs through the provision of connectivity services and Security Communications across Syria and is currently exploring alternative options to provide internet services and backup link for Aleppo and potential satellite communication system.

UNHAS

- **UNHAS is operational again, following receipt of approval from relevant authorities**. Flights between Amman and Damascus will resume starting 6 February. UNHAS also anticipates resuming operations between Damascus and Aleppo and Damascus and Qamishli - pending the reopening of Aleppo and Qamishli airports. In addition, local authorities recently conducted an assessment of the Deir ez-Zor airport with the goal of resuming civilian flights to/from Deir ez-Zor as soon as possible.

