

WFP SYRIA EMERGENCY RESPONSE

External Situation Report

15 December 2024

Hot meals distribution to newly displaced families in Aleppo city. ©WFP/Abdulsamee Homsi

Highlights

- The evolving landscape in Syria has triggered widespread displacement, with over one million people uprooted since 27 November. After nearly 14 years of conflict, renewed instability is exacerbating an already critical humanitarian crisis, characterized by mass internal and external displacement, economic collapse, shattered lives and livelihoods, and declining levels of assistance.
- Since the onset of the crisis, WFP has swiftly expanded its regular food and nutrition assistance, which supports 700,000 people monthly, to include an additional 96,000 newly displaced individuals across Syria.
- WFP is gearing up to deliver food assistance to up to 2.8 million food-insecure people in the coming months. To make this critical expansion possible and ensure aid reaches all those in need across Syria, WFP urgently requires USD 250 million in flexible funding.

IN NUMBERS



700,000 people (approx.) targeted with food, school feeding, nutrition assistance on monthly basis



Over 96,000 displaced reached with emergency assistance across Syria since 27 November



Over 1.1 million people displaced since 27 November, in addition to **7.2 million IDPs** (2024)



3 million people severely food insecure before 27 November, while an additional 12.4 million are food insecure (10 million) or at risk of falling into food insecurity (2024 HNO)



US\$ 250 million of flexible funding urgently needed to scale up emergency response

increase further in the coming weeks. Simultaneously, reports suggest hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries are contemplating a return to Syria.

- **Basic services and markets are facing significant disruption**, due to uncertainty, insecurity and supply challenges. Food prices have soared, with essential items like rice, sugar, and oil in short supply. Many bakeries are unable to operate, leading to a dramatic rise in bread prices - up to 900 percent in some areas. This new situation is straining market functionality and threatening the continuity of basic services, including nationwide bread subsidies.
- **Before 27 November events, food insecurity in Syria was already at alarming levels**, 3 million people severely food insecure, and an additional 12.4 million people food insecure or at risk of falling into food insecurity. In addition, 7.2 million people had been displaced internally, while another 500,000 people sought refuge in Syria following the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon in October.
- **Only 30 percent of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was funded in 2024**, forcing humanitarian activities to focus on the most vulnerable and leaving many Syrians at risk of further destitution. WFP is concerned that prolonged instability could increase vulnerabilities and undermine the social cohesion essential for navigating this critical period.

SITUATION UPDATE

- The **situation in Syria remains fluid and fraught with uncertainty**. Protracted and emerging humanitarian needs, many of which remain unmet, pose challenges to the transition.
- **Over one million people have been internally displaced** since 27 November. This number could

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS & CAPACITY

- Since 27 November, **WFP has remained operational** adapting to the evolving security situation to ensure the safety of staff. The Country Office in Damascus is accountable for the whole operation, overseeing offices across Syria (Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, Latakia, Qamishli and Deir-ez-Zor) and in Gaziantep and Mersin. As insecurity subsides, activities have resumed regularly in all offices, although Deir-ez-Zor continues to be managed remotely due to ongoing fighting.
- WFP's work in Syria remains **firmly anchored in humanitarian principles**. WFP's principled, coherent, and needs-based approach has allowed for rapid adaptation to recent events. WFP is engaging with all relevant parties to ensure access to affected communities and the safe movement of staff and supplies, prioritizing the urgent delivery of assistance to those in need.
- **WFP has quickly adapted its concept of operations** to the new situation. Plans are already in motion to utilize all safe and viable corridors to deliver and distribute assistance throughout Syria. Enhanced supply chain strategies now include expanded use of the Turkish corridor and the testing of a new route from Iraq in the northeast, alongside the continued use of established corridors from Syrian ports, Jordan and Lebanon. WFP remains operationally agile, continuously adjusting supply chains further and implementing the most appropriate and effective assistance modalities based on evolving needs.
- **WFP's cooperating partners, primarily local NGOs, remain operational**, and continue to be trusted by the communities they serve. Most of them have reached agreements with new local authorities to resume activities, following some disruptions in the aftermath of 27 November due to legal ambiguity, security concerns, and lack of liquidity and electricity.

WFP RESPONSE

- **WFP has swiftly readjusted its capacity to continue providing regular monthly assistance to 700,000 severely food insecure people**, including food and nutrition assistance and school meals, while also expanding relief to newly displaced populations.
- Within days of the crisis, **WFP distributed hot meals, ready-to-eat rations, food baskets, and date bars to over 96,000 newly displaced individuals** across Syria, including in Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Raqqa, al-Hasakah, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Tartous and Latakia. As insecurity eases and markets and banks resume operations, **WFP is also moving forward with its regular food and nutrition assistance for the December cycle** in most locations.
- **WFP is planning to provide food and nutrition assistance to 2.8 million people** in the coming

months, including 1.6 million people newly displaced as a result of the most recent events. Although current displacement figures and response plans remain tentative pending further assessments, pre-27 November needs are well established, including 3 million people already severely food insecure.

- Following 27 November, **banditry and lawlessness have impacted WFP's assets**, with some warehouses breached and commodities looted. WFP is assessing the full extent of the damage and losses. These losses have reduced the availability of stock in-country, heightening the urgency for funding to ensure the continuity and expansion of assistance.

CLUSTERS AND COMMON SERVICES

Food Security Sector (FSS)

- The **Food Security Sector** has been engaged since the onset of the emergency, coordinating the response among partners to optimize available resources, ensure complementarity, and prevent overlaps in assistance.
- Given the new operational environment in Syria and the potential for increased mobility across the entire territory, **the role of the Whole-of-Syria Food Security Sector will be even more critical in ensuring coordination**, identifying gaps and minimizing duplication.

Logistics Cluster

- The **Logistics Cluster** is monitoring the situation and will work with Global Logistics Cluster to provide on demand services to partners and explore the best and most efficient ways to augment service delivery.

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster

- The **Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)** is supporting the humanitarian community and UN Hubs through the provision of connectivity services and Security Communications, including boosting the bandwidth of VSAT connections and supplying additional communications equipment.

FUNDING REQUIREMENT

- Based on preliminary estimates, **WFP urgently requires USD 250 million to scale up emergency response and deliver food and nutrition assistance to up to 2.8 million people**. This includes 1.6 million people affected by the current events in Syria, alongside one million food insecure and vulnerable people identified before 27 November, and 200,000 recent arrivals from Lebanon.
- Urgent funding is needed to prevent breaks across some commodities and some programme interventions in the first two months of 2025. Flexible contributions are key to enable WFP to use any assistance modality and any corridor to reach those in need.