



SAVING  
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LIVES

## MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL ESCALATION EMERGENCY RESPONSE Situation Report #2 13 March 2026

### IN NUMBERS



**240,000 displaced people** assisted in **Lebanon** with food and cash to date.



**24,500 displaced** people received date bars at **Syria** crossings.

**32,559 refugees in settlements** assisted with food and cash in **Iran**.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

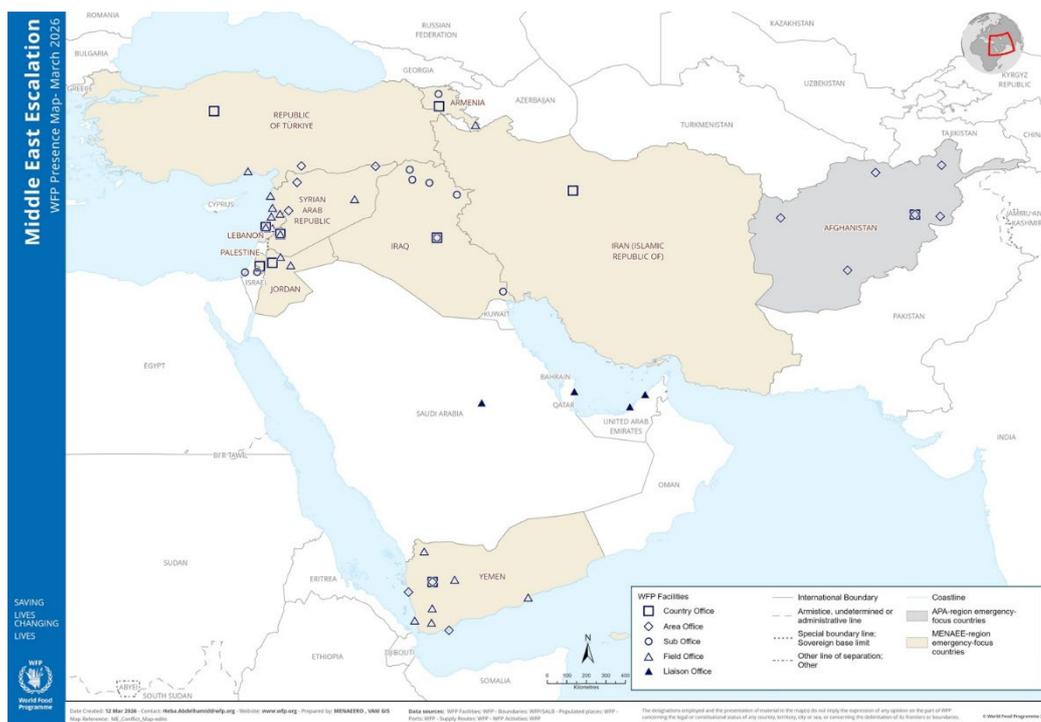
- At the onset of the emergency, WFP activated the Corporate Focus emergency phase for the Middle East Regional Escalation, covering nine countries affected by the broader regional and global spillover. This activation ensures WFP can rapidly scale life-saving assistance, by swiftly directing resources and expertise to where needs are greatest
- In Iran, WFP continued to assist more than 32,500 Afghan refugees in settlements through cash transfers, bread and wheat flour, as well as take-home school snacks for children amid ongoing security constraints.
- As the conflict intensifies and humanitarian needs rise, WFP scaled up its emergency response in Lebanon to reach over 240,000 unique conflict-affected people across shelters and communities since 2 March.
- In Syria, WFP has provided 24,500 date bars to newly arriving families from Lebanon at Jdeidet Yabous and Jousieh crossings, with plans to begin distributions at Al-Arida crossing soon.

### Situation Update

- Escalations continue across the Middle East on multiple fronts, with no signs of de-escalation.
- The sustained insecurity is increasing risks to civilian infrastructure and humanitarian access, disrupting supply chains and threatening food security through rising prices, market disruptions, and reduced access to livelihoods.
- In parallel, ongoing hostilities are driving new displacement and secondary movements, placing additional pressure on host communities and humanitarian response capacity.
- At the global level, continued attacks on strategic and energy-related assets - alongside the prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz and insecurity in the Red Sea - are disrupting global supply chains and fueling volatility in energy markets, with knock-on effects on transport costs, inflation, and rising food prices in local markets, particularly in food import-dependent countries.

### WFP Response

- At the onset of the emergency, **WFP activated the Corporate Focus emergency phase for the Middle East Regional Escalation**, covering nine countries: Iran, Armenia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the State of Palestine, Syria, Türkiye, and Yemen. Country offices have updated their emergency preparedness and contingency plans to address evolving risks and maintain operational continuity.



- WFP teams continue to assess local emergency capacities and observe populations movements along the border with Iran as part of the emergency preparedness efforts.

### Iran

- While no large-scale cross-border displacement has been confirmed, [UNHCR](#) estimates that approximately 3.2 million people have reportedly left major cities in Iran, relocating towards the north of the country and rural and peripheral areas, seeking safety.
- WFP continues to **provide food and cash assistance to approximately 33,000 Afghan refugees**. Despite some operational challenges with the banking system, WFP has been able to successfully transfer March cash assistance.
- Overall, WFP disbursed approximately USD 0.2 million in cash-based transfers (CBT). This benefitted 32,559 refugees across 20 settlements who received their regular cash entitlements. In parallel, 408 individuals benefited from additional cash top-ups under the Disability Inclusion initiative, while 2,618 school-aged girls received cash incentives through the Girls' Education Programme.
- Following a one-week national mourning period schools reopened on 8 March but continued remote learning due to security concerns. To ensure students do not lose

their entitlements, WFP provided school snacks for 9,000 children in Afghani refugee camps as take-home rations.

- For the next six months (March – August 2026), **WFP Iran requires USD 2 million to sustain its regular operations.**

### Lebanon

- To date, almost 131,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are staying in 612 shelters, out of which over 574 shelters reached maximum capacity.
- Based on self-registrations in the Ministry of Social Affairs' conflict affected population survey, it is estimated that over 830,000 people are currently displaced inside and outside shelters.
- Tensions are rising across Lebanon, driven by mass displacement, misinformation, and pressure on host communities. Host areas are experiencing growing pressure, regulatory restrictions, and localized disputes.
- **WFP scaled up its emergency response to reach over 240,000 unique conflict-affected people across shelters and communities** since 2 March. This includes 63,700 displaced people receiving hot meals, light Ready-to-Eat (RTEs), snacks, and packs of bread in 251 shelters and almost 192,300 individuals who received cash assistance leveraging the established national shock-responsive social safety net.

- In addition, under the Regional Emergency Preparedness and Response Trust Fund, a WFP-managed regional fund investing in preparedness to enable faster, cost-effective emergency response in the Middle East, 404 mt of food stocks were dispatched from Türkiye to support Lebanon's scale-up of food assistance; the first real-time deployment of this mechanism, while an additional 600 mt will be shipped shortly. These supplies are expected to support up to 234,000 people.
- To support the Government-led emergency response, the humanitarian community launched a three-month Flash [Appeal](#) (March–May 2026), seeking USD 308.3 million to deliver life-saving assistance and protection to 1 million affected people, including Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinian refugees, and migrants. Of this total, USD 56 million is allocated to the Food Security and Agriculture Sector, and USD 48 million to Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance to help families meet food and other basic needs.
- With rising needs outpacing available resources, **WFP urgently requires USD 77.6 million to sustain emergency operations for three months.** This funding is critical to support not only displaced individuals in shelters but also to expand assistance to a growing number of over 800,000 affected people.

### Syria

- Cross border arrivals from Lebanon continue at reduced levels. As of 10 March, 92,333 Syrians and 8,533 Lebanese have crossed into Syria, with a notable decline at Jousieh since 8 March. Displaced people are largely coming from southern Lebanon and Beirut, through a mix of planned returns and temporary departures in search of safety.
- WFP has provided **24,500 date bars to newly arriving families** at Jdeidet Yabous and Jousieh, with plans to begin distributions at Al-Arida in partnership with SARC.. WFP will continue monitoring the situation and engaging authorities to provide appropriate support.
- For the next six months (March – August 2026), **WFP Syria requires USD 175 million to sustain its regular operations.**

### Palestine

- The regional escalation in the Middle East continues to restrict the flow of assistance

into Gaza. While Kerem Shalom reopened on 3 March and throughput via the Egypt Corridor has improved, no other crossings—including Zikim or Rafah—are currently operational, constraining humanitarian deliveries, commercial cargo, access to North Gaza, and medical evacuations.

- Although the reopening of Kerem Shalom has contributed to some stabilization in food prices following the initial sharp increase after the onset of the regional conflict, prices remain higher than pre-escalation levels and continue to fluctuate depending on the volume of goods entering Gaza.
- For the next six months (March – August 2026), **WFP Palestine requires USD 213 million to sustain its regular operations.**

### Afghanistan

- Amid ongoing escalations, border consortium partners continue to observe daily arrivals from Iran closely, as any sustained increase in return movements over the next two months, would place significant pressure on response capacities.
- Regional escalation acts as a [secondary](#) but compounding shock for WFP Afghanistan operations by increasing fuel, freight, and insurance costs, which raises food prices and heightens the risk of localized shortages amid already constrained trade corridors. It is also heightening displacement and return risks for Afghans in Iran, reducing remittances, and disrupting humanitarian supply chains—particularly for nutrition commodities—further exacerbating food security and operational risks.
- WFP is preparing to provide assistance for increased returns but severe funding shortfalls continue to limit preparedness and response capacity. As part of its contingency planning, and in view of the intensification of the conflict along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border along with the Middle East escalation, **WFP urgently requires an additional USD 15.2 million to support 320,000 affected people, including 140,000 IDPs and 180,000 returnees from Iran,** through general food distribution and nutrition assistance.

### Contacts

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