



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL ESCALATION EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Situation Report #8

23 April 2026

IN NUMBERS



611,200 displaced people assisted in **Lebanon** with food and cash to date.



112,576 displaced people received date bars at **Syria** crossings.



33,500 refugees in settlement supported with food and cash assistance in **Iran**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite the ceasefire, nearly two months into the escalation in the Middle East, sustained supply chain disruptions, port congestion, and transport delays continue to drive up delivery costs and timelines for food, energy, fertilizers, and other essential commodities, along with straining humanitarian operations, disproportionately affecting the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations, both within the region and beyond.
- In Iran, WFP assistance continues uninterrupted, reaching 33,424 refugees across 20 settlements, with plans to expand to additional refugees referred by the authorities to support evolving needs.
- In Lebanon, despite deteriorating security conditions, the Logistics Cluster, with the support of WFP, has facilitated 12 convoys so far, assisting 59,900 affected people in hard-to-reach areas. Ensuring safe, reliable humanitarian access, including effective deconfliction, is urgent to respond effectively to growing humanitarian needs.
- In Syria, WFP continues its emergency response, distributing date bars to over 112,000 people transiting through Jousieh and Jdeidet Yabous border points amid continued displacement and movement pressures.

Global Food Insecurity Impact

- Nearly two months into the Middle East escalation, disrupted supply chains, port congestion, and transport delays continue to increase the cost and time needed to deliver food, energy, fertilizers and other key commodities, hitting the world's poorest and most vulnerable the hardest, in the region and far beyond.
- As of mid-April, wheat flour prices in Gaza remain 85 percent above pre-escalation levels, after peaking at 122 percent in early April. While the reopening of Zikim crossing has allowed limited inflows following temporary closures of key crossings after the recent escalation, overall volumes remain insufficient to ease price pressures.
- Due to its heavy dependence on imported food and fuel, Egypt has been particularly exposed to external shocks. Since the escalation, prices of essential commodities have risen sharply, with vegetable prices nearly tripling, staple foods increasing by around 17 percent, and dairy products by about 5 percent. At the same time, fuel, energy, and transport costs have climbed by 16–20 percent, further compounding inflationary pressures.
- Since the onset of the crisis, the Food Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) has increased by around 9 percent in both Syria and Lebanon as of March.
- Beyond the Middle East, in parts of Asia, [anecdotal reporting](#) indicates some farmers are delaying or forgoing planting rice due to high costs, contributing to heightened food insecurity.
- In Africa, impacts are already evident in countries such as Kenya, where the escalation has reduced Ramadan meat exports this year, while farmers are increasingly struggling to access scarce fertilizer supplies for crop production. While WFP assistance continues to cushion the most vulnerable, higher prices and logistical disruptions are also increasing operational challenges for humanitarian response.

WFP Response

- WFP continues to support affected people across the Middle East, leveraging contingency planning and pre-positioned food stocks; amid escalating needs, critically low funding and pre-existing unmet humanitarian demands.

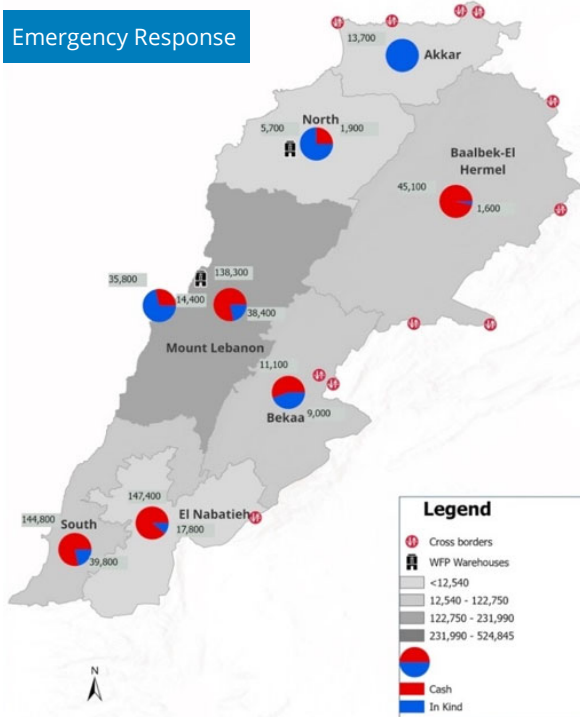
Iran

- According to the Government of Iran, approximately [3.2 million people](#) (around 800,000 households) have been internally relocated, one of the largest internal movements in the country in recent decades. An estimated 75 percent are in Tehran, currently accommodated in temporary facilities, including schools, guesthouses, and sports halls. In some locations, overcrowding has reportedly strained basic services.
- As of April, according to WFP assessment, the cost of the food basket (MEB) in Iran is 131 percent higher year-on-year (compared to the April 2025 average) and nearly 12 percent higher than pre-crisis levels as of 20 April, indicating sustained cost pressures since the onset of the crisis. Compared to early April, prices of protein products continued to rise as of mid-April, with tuna and milk recording the highest increases of nearly 13 percent
- At the same time, economic uncertainty and reduced income opportunities have led to a decline in household purchasing activity, estimated at around 19 percent during the escalation period (based on official figures).
- Authorities have introduced market-stabilization measures, including temporary export restrictions on selected foods, expansion of electronic voucher coverage to additional protein and fresh produce, maintenance of cash transfer values, and contingency planning for bread supply. While these measures have helped avert shortages and broaden access to proteins and fresh produce for vulnerable groups, their coverage and sustainability remain constrained by fiscal and operational limitations.
- WFP operations continue without interruption, assisting 33,424 refugees across 20 settlements, including 800 newly arrived refugees who relocated to the settlements following the recent escalation. An additional 7,000 refugees have recently been referred to WFP by the Iranian Government, and integrated into existing settlements, where they are receiving in-kind support. In parallel, WFP is working with the authorities to finalize documentation for an additional 5,000 refugees to begin receiving cash assistance.
- Beneficiaries receive food and cash including daily bread through WFP-supported bakeries and wheat

flour distributions supporting home-based baking in smaller locations.

- Due to prevailing insecurity and the shift to remote learning, school feeding continues through take-home rations for around 9,000 school children.

Lebanon



- Following the announcement of a ten-day ceasefire on 16 April, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in shelters declined by 26 percent from around 142,000 to 121,000 by 21 April. This reduction is considered temporary, as movements were largely cautious and driven by short term home assessments rather than improved security conditions. Despite the ceasefire, implementation on the ground remains inconsistent with reports of continued demolitions, drone activity, and damage to infrastructure in southern Lebanon. The designation of a “Yellow Line” restricting access to several border villages continues to constrain sustainable returns and complicates the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected people.
- Since the escalation, **WFP reached 611,200 conflict-affected people with food and cash assistance in shelters and across communities.** This includes almost 162,000 food-assisted people and 502,000 receiving cash assistance. Of those:
 - WFP provided food assistance to 109,000 displaced people in 459 shelters across Lebanon. This includes the distribution of 3.2 million hot meals, and thousands of cold meals,

light Ready-to-Eat (RTEs), packages of bread, food parcels (dry rations) and snacks.

- Outside shelters, WFP provided food assistance to 53,200 conflict-affected people in host communities or hard-to-reach areas.
- This week, the Logistics Cluster successfully facilitated, with the support of WFP, three convoys of 20 trucks on behalf of seven organizations, to Ebel El Saki border village, Tyr and Kfarhouna, Al Rihan, delivering vital humanitarian aid, including WFP's food parcels, to 12,000 conflict-affected people.
- **Since the escalation, twelve convoys have been completed, assisting almost 59,500 affected people in hard-to-reach areas.**
- WFP monitoring of the Shock-Responsive Social Safety Net (SRSN) cash assistance redemption confirms significant displacement among Lebanese IDPs. Mount Lebanon and Beirut have emerged as the main displacement corridors, accounting for 41 percent and 17 percent of redemptions, respectively. In El Nabatieh, only 5 percent of assisted households continue redeeming in their areas of origin, while 21 percent do so in the South, with average displacement distances exceeding 55 km.
- Similar trends are observed among Syrian refugee households, with Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa serving as primary destinations. Only 11 percent of refugees registered in El Nabatieh redeem assistance locally, while 76 percent of those registered in the South continue to do so - largely reflecting registrations in Saida district, which remains unaffected. In contrast, in Sour - the only affected district in the South - local redemption has dropped to 30 percent, indicating substantial outward movement. **Overall, redemption patterns highlight the role of WFP cash assistance in enabling mobility and maintaining access amid evolving displacement dynamics.**

Syria

- As of 20 April, more than 308,441 people crossed into Syria from Lebanon since the escalation, including over 251,000 Syrians and nearly 47,800 Lebanese. Among the Syrians, close to 72,000 have expressed an intention to return permanently (UNHCR). Most crossings occurred through Masnaa-Jdeidet Yabous and Al Qaa-Joussieh.

Priority humanitarian needs have included food supplies, due to the lack of food availability at the border-crossings, safe drinking water, shelter and non-food items (NFIs) and transportation.

- Overall, **WFP continued its emergency response, distributing date-bars to 40,520 people at Jousieh and 72,056 at Jdeidet Yabous respectively.**
- Since the re-opening of Syria's airspace, UNHAS flights were cleared to operate in Damascus, Aleppo and Qamishli. Monitoring is ongoing as commercial flights gradually resume to and from Damascus International Airport, with arrivals and departures proceeding in accordance with approved schedules.
- For the next six months (May–October 2026), **WFP Syria requires USD 189 million to sustain its regular operations.**

Afghanistan

- About 190,900 refugees have [returned](#) to Afghanistan from Iran since 28 February.
- The closure of the Afghanistan–Pakistan border since 12 October 2025, compounded by the escalation in Iran, have disrupted the Dubai-Iran supply route, further driving up food prices and deepening already high food and nutrition insecurity. As a result, WFP has faced a complete stock outage of specialized nutritious food essential for women and children recovering from malnutrition.
- As a contingency measure to reduce reliance on the southern corridor, WFP is exploring alternative routes. In the interim, approximately 400 mt of fortified biscuits stored at the UNHRD hub in Dubai have been dispatched and are currently en route to Afghanistan via Türkiye, and is moving additional food through alternative routes via Azerbaijan and a trial corridor through Iran to mitigate supply gaps.
- Despite severe funding shortfalls, WFP is prepared to scale up support for increased returns. In light of the intensified conflict along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border and the broader Middle East escalation, **WFP urgently requires USD 15.2 million to assist 320,000 people** - 140,000 IDPs and 180,000 returnees from Iran - through food and nutrition support.

Contacts

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