



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Lebanon Situation Report

March 2023

Population | **6.8 million**
2021 Human Development Index | **112 out of 191**
Income Level (World Bank) | **Lower-middle**
2021 GNI CAPITA (US\$) | **3,450**

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Lebanon is entering its fourth year of a severe economic, political, and social crisis while also hosting the largest number of refugees per capita in the world. Record-high global food and fuel prices have added to the country's already dire situation.

These crises have led to high levels of poverty and food insecurity amongst both Lebanese and refugee communities. The first Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) for Lebanon in September 2022 found that a projected 1.46 million Lebanese and 800,000 Syrian refugees – 42 percent of the total population – are facing acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3, *Crisis*, and Phase 4, *Emergency*) by April 2023 due to the worsening economic crisis and increase in food prices.

Basic living conditions are in continuous decline. The 2022 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees found that 90 percent of Syrian refugee families were in need of humanitarian assistance to survive, with the most basic needs out of reach due to inflation. Based on WFP's Household Deprivation Score, 60 percent of the Lebanese population was multi-dimensionally deprived in August 2022, up from 53 percent in December 2021, despite the assistance provided.

WFP is at the forefront of the response to Lebanon's economic and refugee crisis, which supported 2 million of the most vulnerable Lebanese and refugees in 2022 to meet their food and other essential needs. WFP is maintaining its assistance to vulnerable communities in 2023, targeting 2.4 million people.

IN NUMBERS

3.5 M
people in need of assistance

1.6 M
people assisted in March 2023

\$21 M
cash-based transfers made

3,200 MT
of food distributed

SITUATION UPDATE

The price of the food Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) monitored by WFP significantly increased in February, reaching LBP 1.9 million compared to LBP 1.3 million in January. The price of the full SMEB (food and other essential needs) for a family of five also increased by 36 percent in February since the previous month, reaching LBP 18.4 million. This is due to sharp currency depreciation during the month, where the value of the USD reached a record-low average of LBP 100,000/USD.

The consumer price index (CPI) increased by 25.5 percent in February 2023, registering its largest rise since the start of the economic crisis. The CPI index has now risen for twelve months in a row. Between January and February, food and energy prices increased by 40 percent and 23 percent respectively, while quarterly and yearly food inflation reached 68 percent and 261 percent.

An open-ended strike was announced by employees of the state telecommunications company on 24 March to demand higher wages to help cope with inflation and the worsening economic situation. The strike, coupled with the reliance on generators to power telephone stations, has led to internet and phone outages in several regions of Lebanon. No impact on WFP operations was recorded and the strike was put on hold until the upcoming Cabinet session, following calls by the Telecom Minister to endorse reforms and answer employee demands.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

	% Funded	Available	Required
COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN (2023–2025)	7%	\$346million	\$5.3billion
2023 TOTAL REQUIREMENTS	19%	\$346million	\$1.8billion

Net Funding Requirements (Apr – Sep 2023)
US\$ 436 million



WFP RESPONSE

Cash Assistance for Refugees

In March, WFP provided unconditional cash assistance to 918,000 refugees through 3 modalities:

- **Multipurpose Cash** for food and other essential needs redeemable at ATMs or money transfer agents: 268,800 Syrian refugees
- **Cash-for-Food** for food needs redeemable at ATMs, money transfer agents, or shops: 328,700 Syrian refugees and 8,200 refugees of other nationalities.
- **Food e-cards** for food needs redeemable at WFP-contracted shops: 313,000 Syrian refugees

In March, WFP increased the transfer value of cash assistance from LBP 800,000 to LBP 1.1 million per person for food, and from LBP 1.6 million to LBP 2.5 million per family for other essential needs. The increase of the value of assistance is meant to reduce the impact of currency depreciation and inflation on beneficiaries.

Economic Crisis Response for Lebanese

WFP supported 280,000 vulnerable Lebanese individuals (74,000 households) with food parcels in March as part of its response to the economic crisis.

School Meals

WFP resumed its School Meals programme in March, providing school snacks and cold meals through school kitchens to approximately 72,000 refugee and Lebanese students in 124 schools. WFP also launched a new 'Satellite School Kitchen' modality, where existing school kitchens expand production of cold meals to additional students in nearby schools. In March, 3 existing schools that are part of the school kitchens initiative expanded production to 7 nearby schools in Akkar, Tyre, and Zahle, providing meals to 3,000 additional students.

Support to Social Protection Programmes

In March, WFP assisted 365,000 Lebanese individuals (65,000 families) through the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), including 1,700 new families who received assistance for the first time in 2023 as part of the ongoing scale-up of the NPTP. In addition, WFP trained more than 500 social workers in the Ministry of Social Affairs on digital data collection tools and data quality control procedures.

Around 4,000 new families were enrolled in the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme in March, following the Government's decision to extend and expand assistance through the ESSN. As of March, 80,000 families (367,000 individuals) received cash entitlements through the ESSN.

Between December 2022 and April 2023, WFP conducted a due diligence review of the ESSN and NPTP to provide guidance to the Government on how to best integrate both programmes for improved social assistance. WFP assessed the programmes' key components, delivery chain, governance, information systems and organization. The due diligence report will be shared with the Government in April.

Livelihoods

3,000 Syrian and Lebanese participated in livelihoods activities in March, ranging from trainings on farming and food processing, forest management and reforestation, and construction of irrigation canals and agricultural roads. WFP also distributed start-up kits to 400 vulnerable refugees and Lebanese who attended skills development trainings focused on food system components.

Supply Chain & Retail

In March, WFP conducted shop evaluations for retailers whose contracts end in April considering both their performance and their operational need based on 2023 targeting results. Of the 95 shops with contracts expiring, 65 were extended.



GENDER, PROTECTION & ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

WFP received 61,000 claims in March through its call centre. 61 percent of claimants requested WFP assistance (up from 39 percent in February), 19 percent requested information on eligibility, loading and SMS validation, 9 percent requested to amend their personal data, 9 percent expressed programmatic concerns related to validation and distribution sites, and 2 percent were related to protection issues. Protection-related claims were referred to relevant services, including gender-based violence case management, legal counselling, and shelter. Almost all (98 percent) claims were resolved in March, while the rest are pending action/feedback from WFP.

WFP organized an exposition on International Women's Day, where 14 Syrian and Lebanese women sold traditional home-made food provisions and participated in a cooking event with celebrity British chef Asma Khan.

Gender and social inclusion training sessions were held for social workers in the Ministry of Social Affairs, supporting data collection for the NPTP and ESSN programmes.

MONITORING & ASSESSMENTS

Crowding was reported by a large number of refugee beneficiaries receiving cash assistance in February, similar to the previous month. 77 percent of beneficiaries who withdrew cash at ATMs and 53 percent who redeemed assistance at money transfer operators reported crowding in February. WFP continues to expand redemption points across the country to help reduce crowding and transportation costs for beneficiaries.

Increased travel costs were reported by Lebanese receiving in-kind food and NPTP assistance between January and February. On average, the two-way cost to reach distribution sites in February was LBP 246,000, up from LBP 135,000, largely due to hikes in fuel prices. For beneficiaries receiving cash assistance through the NPTP, the two-way cost to redemption points increased from LBP 102,000 to LBP 142,000 between the two months.

Only 2 percent of refugee beneficiaries and one individual receiving NPTP assistance reported facing issues redeeming assistance at ATMs or money transfer operators in February. The issues were flagged by WFP's monitoring team and WFP is taking action accordingly.

KEY CHALLENGES

WFP increased transfer values in local currency for Syrian refugees in February and March and continues to advocate for appropriate increases. The increased volume of cash required at ATMs however is resulting in operational challenges, including liquidity and replenishment issues at ATMs. Amid continuing currency depreciation and difficulties to ensure cash transfer to beneficiaries by banks, WFP continues to work on finalizing dollarization of assistance for refugees.

WFP COUNTRY STRATEGY

COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN (2023-2025)

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Economically-vulnerable and food insecure people in Lebanon, including refugees, meet their basic needs during and in the aftermath of crises.

Focus area: *Crisis response*

Activities: Provide unconditional assistance to crisis-affected people in Lebanon, including refugees

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Extremely poor and vulnerable people in Lebanon, including children, are more resilient through inclusion in national social safety nets throughout the year.

Focus area: *Resilience building*

Activities: Provide unconditional cash transfers to extremely poor Lebanese through national safety net programmes.
Provide nutritious school meals to Lebanon and refugee children.

Strategic Result 4: Development of sustainable food systems

Strategic Outcome 3: Individuals, households and communities vulnerable to economic and climatic shocks in Lebanon have more resilient livelihoods by 2025.

Focus area: *Resilience building*

Activities: Provide vulnerable Lebanese and refugee communities with integrated resilience and area-based livelihood support through conflict-sensitive and gender transformative approaches.

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs

Strategic Outcome 4: National institutions in Lebanon have increased capacity to manage social safety nets and other programmes by 2025.

Focus area: *Resilience building*

Activities: Provide technical expertise, capacity strengthening and policy advice to enhance Government capacity.

Strategic Result 8: Enhanced global partnerships

Strategic Outcome 5: Humanitarian stakeholders benefit from enhanced coordination and mandated services to deliver assistance during, in the aftermath, and in anticipation of crises.

Focus area: *Crisis response*

Activities: Provide sector coordination and mandated services to humanitarian partners.
Provide on-demand services, including resources transfers, to Government and other partners.

Donors

Australia, Austria, Canada, Cyprus, European Union, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lebanon's Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Malta, Norway, Poland, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Switzerland, USA

FOOD SECURITY & AGRICULTURE SECTOR

In February, WFP and 16 sector partners reached 1.62 million refugees and Lebanese through cash and food assistance. In addition, 3,100 farmers and 135 agricultural cooperatives, associations, and small businesses were supported through capacity building and/or inputs and assets provision. The estimated amount of cash disbursed into the market to enhance agricultural production is USD 661,000.

ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

On 8 March 2023, WFP hosted Deputy Director General in charge of economic investment and relations with IFIs, Katerina Mathernova, in Zahle. WFP organised focus group discussions with Syrian refugees to meet with the Deputy Director and share their situation and stories directly.

As part of ongoing advocacy efforts to mobilize resources for regular operations, WFP continues strategic engagements with key donors and exploring funding opportunities through new funding streams. Resources are required to fund the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) supporting the most vulnerable Lebanese families, from October 2023 onwards.

In March, WFP hosted Chef Advocate Asma Khan, showing her around WFP's operations across the country. The Chef Advocate visited families receiving both cash and in-kind assistance. Khan also visited small businesses and cooperatives benefiting from technical and monetary assistance provided by WFP. The visit was accompanied by a series of videos and visuals posted on WFP Lebanon's Twitter page, as well as other WFP and Share the Meal social media accounts. (Link [here](#))

STORY WORTH TELLING



Photo: WFP/Photo Library

Hanaa, a 33-year-old woman, came with her husband and 3 children in 2013 from the countryside of Damascus, Syria to Bekaa, Lebanon. Even before the start of Lebanon's economic crisis, meeting basic needs was a challenge for Hanaa's family. Her husband, who suffers injuries from the war, requires medication and regular treatment.

The crisis increased the already-heavy burden they had to endure seeking refuge in Lebanon. Meeting the most basic needs has become even more difficult, particularly for their children and their education. Previously receiving WFP's food e-card, Hanaa's family started receiving multipurpose cash assistance in January 2023, allowing them to buy essential food and non-food items.

'Cash assistance gives us choice to prioritize our spendings – it's now our support during these difficult times' - says Hanaa.

WFP CASH & IN-KIND ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES AND LEBANESE

March 2023

