

UNRWA Continues to Deliver Basic Services amidst COVID19- Crisis

Despite challenges created by the COVID-19 crisis, UNRWA continued to deliver basic services and essential humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees throughout the month of April. The Agency had to adopt new measures to respond to the evolving crisis and to adjust its service delivery modalities to ensure sustainability while protecting the health of beneficiaries and staff alike (please refer to section on COVID-19 response). The socioeconomic impact of the crisis has become increasingly critical as restrictive measures imposed on travel and business operations take effect, exposing Palestine refugees to further vulnerability. Rising prices of basic commodities, staggering inflation rate and rapid devaluation of the Syrian pound are all contributing to a grim situation. Rise in protection cases, particularly incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against children, has been observed.



438,000 Palestine refugees remain in Syria

52% female

31% children



126,000 Palestine refugees belong to the most vulnerable categories

91% of Palestine refugee households in Syria live in absolute poverty

2/3 of Palestine refugees were displaced at least once since 2011

40% of Palestine refugees remain displaced within Syria

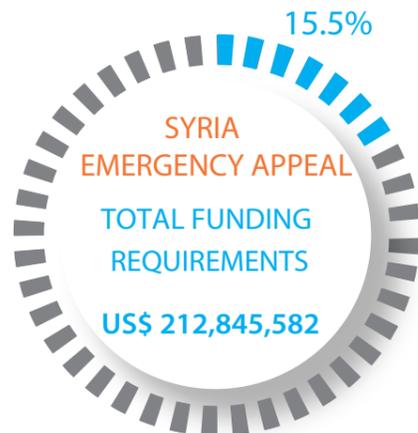


66 Palestine refugees returned from Lebanon and Jordan

13 Palestine refugees returned from other countries



Emergency Appeal Requirements in Syria for 2020



UNRWA requires US\$ 212.8 million to sustain the delivery of humanitarian assistance, basic services and protection interventions to the 438,000 Palestine refugees estimated to remain in Syria.

As of 30 April 2020, a total of US\$ 32.9 million were pledged or received from donors and partners, representing 15.5 per cent of total requirements.

63,933 Palestine refugees received cash assistance



The first round of cash distribution in 2020 started on 23 February, covering four months' worth of assistance.



UNRWA is disseminating awareness raising messages on healthy hygiene practices and behaviours to Palestine refugees through social media and SMS. Posters and printed materials are also made available at UNRWA installations in the camps.



21 hygiene kits for exceptional cases
344 baby kits
16 Jerrycans
1,996 diapers & napkins

82,452 Palestine refugees received food assistance



The first round of food distribution in 2020 began on 24 March.



38,137 health consultations
22,592 female
15,545 male



Sanitation services in the ten accessible camps are carried out regularly in addition to disinfection activities. solid waster collection points continue to be sanitized.



UNRWA has suspended interest rates for loan re-payments and is deferring payments for a period of four months to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.



UNRWA is establishing a support system for the most vulnerable including older persons and children with disabilities and their families, and also for individuals exposed to GBV and child protection issues.



Community-based services are currently suspended. UNRWA has developed a plan to continue delivering most critical services through alternative mechanisms including support over the phone.

COVID-19 Response and Impact on UNRWA Operations in Syria



• Telemedicine support is made available to refugees to enable them seek support remotely and reduce overcrowding at UNRWA health facilities.



• UNRWA rolled out a door-to-door distribution of medicines to 8,000 vulnerable older persons with pre-existing medical conditions.



• The second cash distribution round is planned for end of May.



• As of 30 April 2020, 95 per cent of the refugees had received their cash assistance as part of the first round of distribution.



• UNRWA established eight new food distribution points at UNRWA schools and microfinance offices.



• UNRWA teachers and sanitation labourers are providing support to the distribution teams in the newly established distribution centres.



• Sixteen additional sanitation labourers have been appointed in refugee camps in Hama, Homs, Aleppo and Damascus to meet increased needs arising from the response.



• An estimated 73.4 per cent of UNRWA students are accessing self-learning material through online platforms.



• Approximately 10,000 students in Neirab, Khan Danoun, Khan Eshieh camps and Ramadan gathering have been provided with self-learning material in hard copies due to internet connectivity challenges in these areas.



• TVET students are being supported with learning programme through online platforms. An estimated 80 per cent of students are accessing online education services.



• UNRWA PSS counsellors are providing advices to teachers, students and parents via phone, instant messaging platforms, and email.



• Eight helplines (humanitarian assistance, relief and social services, education and health related) are currently active, ensuring support is provided remotely and strengthening the feedback mechanism.

• UNRWA Syria continues to coordinate with OCHA and the sectors, to ensure inclusion of Palestine refugee needs in the Syria Operational Response Plan in response to COVID-19.

