Only 5.9 %, or approximately US$ 19,577,985 of the US$ 329 million appealed for Syria through the 2018 UNRWA Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal, has been funded.

The United States, the largest single donor to UNRWA, announced US$ 300 million cut in funding in January, provoking a severe financial crisis and a deficit of US$ 446 million. UNRWA intensified its fundraising efforts and launched the Dignity Is Priceless campaign, leading to significant additional support. Despite the efforts, the deficit remains at US$ 217 million by June and the sustainability of UNRWA operations is more than ever at risk for the second semester of 2018.

Impact of reduced emergency funding: Cash Assistance

Following a sharp reduction in emergency income, the cash amount transferred to beneficiaries has started to decrease. While the Emergency Appeal planned for US$32 per person per month, UNRWA was only able to distribute 4 months of assistance during the first semester of 2018. While the first round of 2018 provided US$ 64 per person covering two months, the amount distributed during the second round dropped to US$ 46 per person covering two months. UNRWA is only planning for one additional round until the end of the year, as opposed to four rounds as in previous years. Seven years into the conflict in Syria, Palestine refugees are more than ever in need of cash assistance.

May 2018: Large displacement of Palestine refugees from Yarmouk

Samah al-Shami 25, a single mother of two, fled Yarmouk with her children at the collective shelter in Yalda. “Being a single parent is a huge responsibility. We face enormous hardship and depend on handouts,” Samah says.

February – March: Intensification of hostilities in eastern Ghouta affects up to 2,600 Palestine refugees. UNRWA supports 225 displaced families with emergency assistance and participates in humanitarian response efforts to collective shelters.

April – May: Fighting in southern Damascus intensifies, with 65,000 civilians affected, of whom 12,000 are Palestine refugees. The battle for Yarmouk is particularly fierce, triggering the displacement of its last residents to Yalda (approx. 6,000 people). Government forces take full control of Yarmouk on 21 May. Yarmouk is largely in ruins, including thousands of Palestinian refugee homes.

June: Increase of hostilities in South-West Syria as of 17 June leads to displacement, casualties, and destruction of homes and infrastructure. Between 25,000 and 28,000 Palestine refugees are located in affected areas including Dera’a city, Muzeirib and Jillin.