

UNRWA Syria earthquake response

Situation report #25 – 27 April 2023

Situation in numbers

48,520 Palestine refugees living in 4 affected governorates (Aleppo, Hama, Latakia and Tartous)

46,534 Palestine refugees targeted

20 Palestine refugees have died

2,355 Palestine refugees currently displaced (1,359 females, 996 males, including 41 persons with disabilities)

173 Palestine refugees in emergency shelters (92 females, 81 males, including 8 persons with disabilities)

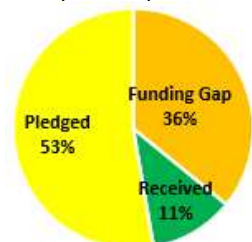
Infrastructure damage

1,076 Palestine refugee houses damaged (166 severely, 309 partially & 601 minor)

11 UNRWA installations damaged (3 partially and 8 will require minor repairs)

Funding Requirements

US\$ 15,149,291 required for UNRWA Syria earthquake response.



Response Geographical Areas

Northern and Central Areas – Aleppo (including Neirab & Ein el-Tal Camps) and Latakia (including Jableh) and Hama.

Situation Overview

During the last two weeks, a team from UNRWA's Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (ICIP) and Relief and Social Services Programmes (RSSP) have continued to visit families that have been directly impacted by the earthquakes, and whose houses have been damaged to assess their situation. 443 families were visited in Aleppo city and in Neirab Camp. The number of families that have approached UNRWA for support to either rent accommodation or to repair their homes reached 600 in Aleppo and 900 in Neirab Camp.

To date, the Engineering Syndicate, a body mandated by the Syrian government to assess earthquake damage working closely with UNRWA has identified 1,076 Palestine refugee homes that have been affected by the earthquake in Aleppo, Latakia and Hama governorates, of which 15% (166) were severely, 29% (309) partially and 56% (601) had minor damage. The majority of damaged buildings were in Aleppo governorate (75%), 23% in Latakia and 2% in Hama.

In addition to refugee homes, the earthquake also damaged 11 UNRWA installations, including health centres and schools. UNRWA has launched tenders to appoint contractors to repair some of these installations, with works expected to get underway during the summer period.

UNRWA in Syria requires urgent funding support to repair and rehabilitate refugee shelters and installations damaged by the earthquake, in addition to providing critical cash assistance, education, health, mental health and psychosocial support services to affected refugees. UNRWA is also working with other UN agencies to update the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan to include post-earthquake response needs as well as Syria Early Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA).

The agency carried out a brief household level survey in the earthquake affected areas during the month of March 2023, to assess the most critical needs. The findings are summarised in **Annex 1**. The report will be shared with partners.

UNRWA Response overview

In-kind Food Assistance

During the last two weeks, UNRWA distributed emergency food baskets to 10 vulnerable Palestine refugee families (48 individuals) who live in collective shelters, tents or with relatives after their homes were destroyed during the earthquake in Latakia and Hama. UNRWA continue to target critical cases with food assistance due to limited funding. In addition to food assistance, seven vulnerable mothers received baby kits in Latakia to meet the basic needs of their newborn babies.

Emergency health

3,351 primary care consultations (58% females) and 140 telemedicine consultations (56% females) were delivered to Palestine refugees through UNRWA health centres in Aleppo, Latakia and Hama during the week. In addition to this, 51 beneficiaries received psychosocial support during the same period, highlighting the strong ongoing need for therapeutic support in the wake of the earthquakes. UNRWA's psychiatrist provided a workshop to raise awareness amongst medical staff in relation to symptoms of depression and their management.

Education in Emergencies

5,390 students attended UNRWA schools each week during the last two weeks (44% girls), slightly higher as compared with recent weeks. The attendance statistics continue to reflect a gradual stabilization of education services in UNRWA schools in earthquake-affected governorates. UNRWA continues to provide recreational activities in schools as an important means of addressing trauma and stress related to the earthquake, in addition to cultivating the idea of schools as safe spaces for children. A career guidance workshop was provided in Bisan School in Hama to 8th and 9th grade female students.

Protection and Social services

3,314 students were provided with psychosocial support activities, focusing mainly on group play and educational sessions in UNRWA schools (51girls). An additional 155 out-of-school children and 94 adults also accessed PSS during the same period. UNRWA ensures that no child is left out of psychosocial support interventions in earthquake-affected areas by targeting both children in and out of schools. UNRWA's Protection team also offered Ramadan Iftar meals to 9th grade students of Khairiyeh and Majd Al Korum School in Latakia and conducted recreational activities for 91 children in Ein el-Tal Camp. In addition to this, 13 cases were being followed up by social workers (70% females).

Needs and gaps

Emergency Cash assistance

UNRWA is seeking additional funds to continue its emergency cash distribution for earthquake-affected refugees for a further two months, in addition to the completed first round, to help them cope with the impact of the earthquake.

Health

UNRWA's Health Centre in Aleppo city is currently operating in a temporary location following the Earthquake and in Ein el-Tal, the mobile health clinic is also operating in a one-room prefab. Support is required to increase the capacity of these temporary facilities so that patients are served with more privacy.

Education

Support is required with funding for additional PSS Counsellors to manage the increased needs due to the earthquake. Additional materials and refreshments are also required to support the diversification of psychosocial support and recreational activities being offered to children in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia.

Protection and Social services.

Aleppo city and Ein el-Tal Camp do not have adequate space to conduct community-based activities. Additional funds are also required for case management (including the provision of selective cash assistance).

Damage assessment and certification

A number of houses that suffered damage remain uncertified by the Government's Engineering Syndicate discussions are ongoing to expedite the processes so that the families can be supported with repairs, subject to availability of funding.

Funding requirements

UNRWA requires US\$ 15.1 million to meet the humanitarian and early recovery needs of Palestine refugees effected by the earthquake in Syria. Thus far, UNRWA has received about US\$ 1.7 million (11%) whilst about US\$ 8 million (53%) has been pledged to date (including in-kind donations totaling USD 358,032 which will be received over the coming two-month period). UNRWA still requires increased support to fund the response and provide adequate support to earthquake affected refugees. Currently, UNRWA is prioritizing essential response items only to critical cases including newly displaced refugees due to low levels of received funding. Without urgent additional funding, UNRWA will be forced to cut some of its essential humanitarian assistance to the detriment of close to 50,000 Palestine refugees who are living in earthquake-affected areas.

Pictures of interventions implemented



Health Clinic staff attend a workshop by an UNRWA psychiatrist on the symptoms and management of depression



Career Guidance Workshop for female students in Bisan School in Hama

Annex 1: Assessment of the Post-Earthquake Situation of Palestine refugees in Aleppo, Latakia & Hama

During the month of March 2023, while distributing the first round of multi-purpose cash assistance SYP 441,500 (USD 64) to the 13,905 households (46,534 beneficiaries) in the affected areas of Aleppo, Latakia and Hama, UNRWA conducted a short household-level assessment of all targeted households to gain a better understanding of their situation and needs. The primary aim of the assessment was to build on the initial rapid needs assessment that was conducted by UNRWA in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and to better inform UNRWA's response on the ground. UNRWA designed a short questionnaire that would not take long to answer while beneficiaries were collecting their payments. The assessment sought to establish the current living conditions of interviewed families, the extent of shelter damage due to the earthquake, the extent to which families were able to access UNRWA services and to identify their immediate needs and concerns, as well as their preferred channels for receiving information from the Agency.

Survey Sample

The survey aimed to interview every household which was targeted for emergency cash assistance that was willing to participate. A total of 13,120 households were interviewed between 26 February and 16 March, representing a 91 per cent response rate. 54 per cent of those interviewed were living in Aleppo, 28 per cent in Latakia and 18 per cent in Hama.

Household Characteristics

As shown in **figure 1**, 20 per cent of households were headed by an older person, 10 per cent were female-headed households, 4 per cent had persons with a disability and 1 per cent were caring for orphans. 2.7 per cent (357 beneficiaries) reported earthquake-related injuries, of which 2 per cent were minor and 0.7 per cent were more serious.

77 per cent (10,186 households) reported that they were living in their own homes at the time of the assessment, 17 per cent (2,181 households) were living with relatives, 2 per cent (288) were living in collective shelters and 1 per cent (80) were sleeping in their cars or on the street. The remaining 3 per cent were renting (123), living in public places (96). Living in tents (75), or at work (15) or had moved to another governorate (10).

Damage Assessment

The assessment sought to gauge the level of damages to the homes of Palestine refugees as a result of the earthquake. As reflected in **figure 2**, 12 per cent (1,518 households) reported severe damage, over fifty per cent (6,637 households) reported minor damage, with the remaining 38 per cent (4,965) reporting no damage to their homes.

Of the 1,518 families who reported severe damage to their homes, 37 per cent (566) reported that they were still living in their homes in spite of the damage, 39 per cent (585) were living with their relatives, 13 per cent (194) in alternative accommodation, 9 per cent (139) in collective shelters and 2 per cent (34) reported living in their cars or on the street.

About one third of all those who were surveyed (4,489 households) confirmed that they had received a visit from the Engineering Syndicate at the time of the assessment.

About 63 per cent (953) of the households that suffered severe damage confirmed that their home had been inspected by the Engineering Syndicate.

Access to UNRWA Services

The vast majority of those surveyed (12,280 households or 94 per cent) stated that they were able to continue to access UNRWA services fully following the earthquake, with 4 per cent (549) able to do so partially and 2 per cent (291) reporting that they were unable to do so.

Those that were unable to access UNRWA's services reported that this was mainly due to the absence of services in their locality and the distance (and associated transportation costs) required to do so.

Of the 288 families that were living in the temporary shelters, 72 per cent reported having no access to heating, 68 per cent reported limited access to hygiene materials, 57 per cent had inadequate access to food and 53 per cent had limited access to toilets.

Immediate Concerns and Needs

In assessing the short-term needs of Palestine refugees in the three affected governorates (**figure 3**), 89 per cent identified food as their top concern, followed by health care at 58 per cent, with 40 per cent identifying mental health and psychosocial supports as their third-most concern. This demonstrates the centrality of mental health and psychosocial support in terms of response needs. The identification of rent as an important concern for 39 per cent of respondents also highlights the importance of transitional shelter cash assistance as a key intervention.

