

UNRWA Responds against Rapid Increase in Number of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

The month of July witnessed a rapid increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Syria. In July, 532 cases were confirmed, compared to 157 cases in June and 79 cases in May. Limited COVID-19 testing masks the true scale of the outbreak, with reports of healthcare facilities filling up, rising death toll and indications that actual cases far exceed reported cases. As of 31 July 2020, nine Palestine refugees have tested positive for COVID-19.

UNRWA continued to adapt to the evolving context by applying the necessary preventative measures to ensure safe and sustainable delivery of essential services and humanitarian assistance. On 8 and 9 July, UNRWA conducted a two-day mission to distribute food baskets and hygiene kits to 795 Palestine refugee families (2,704 individuals) who live in Jdeidet Al Fadel area in rural Damascus, which had been in lock down due to a local outbreak of COVID-19 cases.

438,000 Palestine refugees remain in Syria



126,000 Palestine refugees in most vulnerable category

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

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

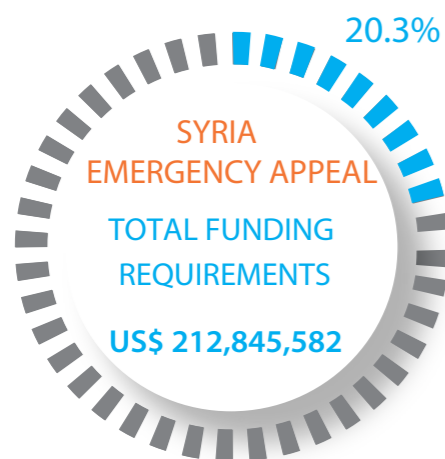
40% of Palestine refugees remain displaced in Syria

94 Palestine refugees returned from Lebanon and Jordan

9 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 31 July 2020, a total of US\$ 43.1million were pledged or received from donors and partners, representing 20.3 per cent of total requirements.

35,563 Palestine refugees received cash assistance



The second cash round started on 21 May covering three months' worth of assistance.

25 UNRWA health facilities are operating a triage system for people with respiratory symptoms, through a dedicated team of health staff.



854 hygiene kits for exceptional cases

235 baby kits

13 Jerrycans

5,756 diapers & napkins



3,063 Palestine refugees received food assistance



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

57,291 Primary health consultations



35,185



22,106



3,315 individuals benefited from 975 microfinance loans



45% female
11% youth



Family Support Offices provided legal consulting services to 50 beneficiaries.

UNRWA launched short-term courses, benefiting persons with disabilities (PwDs) in rural Damascus & Dera'a.



COVID-19 Response and Impact on UNRWA Operations in Syria



- A total of 6,418 telemedicine calls were processed across UNRWA health facilities, to enable Palestine refugees to seek support remotely and reduce overcrowding at UNRWA health facilities.



- UNRWA continued the door-to-door distribution of medicines reaching 180 vulnerable older persons with pre-existing medical conditions in July.



- An additional one-off payment of US\$ 10 per person was delivered exceptionally during the second round of cash assistance in 2020 to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.
- 35,563 Palestine refugees received this payment in July concurrently with the second round of distribution of 2020.



- For in-kind food distribution, UNRWA continues to apply appropriate hygiene and physical distancing practices at distribution centres to mitigate risk of COVID-19. Distribution staff are also provided with PPEs for the same purpose.



- UNRWA distributed personal protection equipment to 125 sanitation laborers.
- Some 4,289 9th grade UNRWA students across Syria wrote their national exam between 22 June and 8 July.
- Seventy-five UNRWA psychosocial counsellors and sixty teachers benefited from training on provision of psychosocial support and delivering self-learning materials remotely.



- UNRWA is offering a mixed modality for delivering TVET courses, alternating between online and in-class training.



- Two hundred and seventy four trainees received training on the employability skills in July.
- As of 31 June, the US\$ 93.4 million updated COVID-19 flash Appeal was 57.6 per cent funded (including confirmed pledges), with the Syria portion being 37.3 per cent funded (including confirmed pledges).

Distribution of food baskets & hygiene kits during mission to locked down area of Jdeidet al-Fadel in July 2020 © 2020 UNRWA Photo

