



An UNRWA student uses hand sanitizer on the first day of the 2020/21 school year in the West Bank. © UNRWA Photo by Kazem Abu-Khalaf.

highlights

- The UNRWA Health Department is leading on the Agency's COVID-19 response and continues to issue a one-page [daily sitrep](#) with the latest epidemiological figures.
- While the number of officially announced COVID-19 cases remains relatively low in Syria, there has been a recent spike in cases and medical sources fear that the country's limited testing capacity is masking the real extent of the outbreak (by 24 August, only 26,572 COVID-19 tests had been carried out). There are unconfirmed reports of healthcare facilities filling up and of rising numbers of death notices and burials indicating that actual cases far exceed official figures. What the official figures do show is that community transmission is widespread. Of the 2,765 cases confirmed by the Syrian Ministry of Health (MoH), as of 31 August, including 629 recoveries and 112 deaths, the majority cannot be traced to a known source. Rising patient numbers are adding pressure to an already fragile health system.
- During August, the UNRWA education programme focused on getting children back to learning. HQ Education Department has worked alongside the five Field offices to support the planning for the 2020/21 new school year, taking into

account the challenges of the COVID-19 virus and the resource constraints of the Agency. Different options have been explored for both Catch Up learning and for the new academic year. The only way forward – if social distancing is to be achieved in classrooms and schools – is the blended learning modality that combines school-based and remote learning. The logistics of its design and implementation are challenging, with decisions having to be made about how much remote learning is feasible for different ages of children and different school subjects. Key surveys and lessons learned from the school closure during the last academic year have shown that any approach to remote learning must not solely rely on high end technology as UNRWA students face challenges with access to devices, internet connectivity and basic infrastructure.

From 20 April to late May UNRWA produced five Weekly Updates on its COVID-19 response and then two Fortnightly Updates (25 May-7 June and 8-21 June). These Updates are now being produced on a monthly basis. In addition, a summary of the Agency's response covering March to June has been issued.

jordan Curfew, in place since 17 March, was again modified (11 p.m. to 6 a.m.) on 25 August and extended until further notice. As of the end of August the Queen Alia International Airport remained closed, with plans to re-open it to a limited number of commercial flights early September. Jordanian authorities closed the Jaber (Naseeb) Border Crossing Point with Syria for one week from 13 August as a precautionary measure due to the spike in COVID-19 cases in Syria. Since 30 August, the Jordan Field Office (JFO) and Amman HQ have been operating at a ceiling of 50 percent of staff in the offices. Agency schools, following health and safety protocols, will start on 1 September.

west bank Due to a spike in COVID-19 cases the State of Emergency was extended until 12 August. However, restrictions were eased on 14 August on the opening times of shops, businesses, restaurants and markets, which can now open on Fridays and Saturdays. The total number COVID-19 cases among refugees was 3,736 cases (by 31 August) distributed throughout the 19 official refugee camps in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The highest infection rates were in Arroub, Fawwar and Dheisheh camps in the southern West Bank. Amongst UNRWA staff the number of active COVID-19 cases is 38 (39 staff have recovered). The West Bank Field Office (WBFO) extended remote working arrangements until 21 August and staff returned to their offices on 25 August in line with government and WHO guidelines. Universities and schools are scheduled to re-open on 6 September, and efforts are being undertaken to ensure compliance with health and hygiene protocols, including the training of teachers and the preparation of sensitization materials on COVID-19.



lebanon General closure and curfew from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., with some essential services exempted, was implemented from 19 August and will remain in force until at least 6 September. Based on the identification of several COVID-19 cases amongst staff, the Lebanon Field Office (LFO) continues to implement a work-from-home policy with only essential staff reporting to offices.

gaza After the first confirmed cases of locally-transmitted COVID-19 infections were reported on 24 August the Palestinian Authority in Gaza imposed a lockdown across the Gaza Strip allowing only short foot journeys to food shops and pharmacies. There was a particular emphasis on preventing movement between governorates, except for critical services. All Gaza Field Office (GFO) installations were closed with personnel working from home except essential health and sanitation staff. The Egyptian border remained closed. The reporting period saw the Kerem Shalom Crossing closed to incoming goods, except humanitarian deliveries, for extended periods due to political tensions. This has resulted in a lack of fuel for Gaza's main power plant, reducing electricity supplies to three hours a day in some cases as of end of August. The Israeli-controlled Erez terminal remains closed with entry facilitated for only a limited number of Gaza ID holders who must then enter 21 days' quarantine.

syria On 15 August, the Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs announced the re-opening of mosques for Friday and congregational prayers in Damascus and Rif Damascus provided that preventative health measures are in place and religious lessons and other activities continue to be suspended. A limited number of commercial and repatriation flights are operating from Damascus International Airport. Further repatriation flights for Syrian citizens took place on 27 July (Sharjah, UAE), 23 August (Doha) and 27 August (Cairo). As of 31 August, 3,611 persons have been repatriated since the start of the pandemic. The Syrian Ministry of Interior updated regulations and instructions for the entry of individuals from Lebanon into Syria on 16 August. Individuals may enter Syria from Lebanon providing they provide proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test carried out at accredited laboratories in Lebanon and within 96 hours of arriving at the border.

unrwa response



health

COVID-19 response activities

COVID-19 response activities	
Jordan (JFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatient services in health centres (HC) have been operating since 14 June. Oral health curative services have also restarted. • The mobile dental clinic in the King Abdullah Park (Irbid) for Palestinian refugees from Syria continues to operate on a weekly basis.
Lebanon (LFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beirut port explosion of 4 August claimed the lives of an estimated 180 people and wounded thousands. Amongst the casualties were two Palestine refugees and 26 others were reportedly injured. While the Palestine refugee camps and UNRWA offices and installations in Beirut suffered only light damage, the overall effect on the country will most likely affect vulnerable communities, including Palestine refugees. • Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health (MPH) halted random COVID-19 testing in Palestine refugee camps in late July to prioritize national test and contact tracing in response to a spike in the number of confirmed cases in the country. • UNRWA Lebanon chairs a technical committee for an effective COVID-19 response for Palestine refugees. Participating organizations are the Government's Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), UNICEF, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), local NGOs and Palestinian political factions. The most recent meeting was held on 27 August. UNRWA area offices are replicating this coordination mechanism at the local level where possible. • Health Centres: Since 17 August, LFO's 27 HCs are operating under restricted opening times (8 a.m. to 1 p.m.). One family health team has been assigned to work with patients with flu-like symptoms on a two-week rotation basis and triage facilities have been set up to separate patients with flu-like symptoms from other patients. The measures, in place since February, have meant that foot traffic at HCs has decreased from a daily average of 3,667 medical consultations in February to 1,833 in August, representing a 50 percent reduction. • Hospitalization: Hospitalization referrals remain limited to life saving and tertiary care that affect morbidity. UNRWA resumed 100 percent of non-urgent surgeries, including cataract surgeries and laminectomies, in late July. However, during the latest lockdown the MPH once again suspended non-urgent surgeries. These are expected to resume after 7 September 2020.

COVID-19 response activities

<p>Syria (SFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Cases: Ten Palestine refugees had tested positive and one refugee died from the coronavirus by the end of August. Three UNRWA staff have tested positive to COVID-19 and 38 UNRWA staff remain in quarantine. The Agency's 25 HCs continue to operate a triage system for people with respiratory symptoms. 51,601 patients have reported respiratory complaints, while 18,452 cases were identified with respiratory symptoms (non-COVID-19) during the reporting period. The Government of Syria has approved COVID-19 PCR tests to be conducted in five private laboratories in Damascus. UNRWA Syria Field Office (SFO) has contracted one of them, Al Khateeb laboratory, where staff can now take a PCR test in coordination with the Agency's Health Department. The Agency will reimburse staff 95 percent of the cost of the test. • Health Centres: Several suspended health services resumed during the reporting period, including examinations for new non-communicable disease (NCD) patients, pre-natal examinations, dental curative consultations for 15 patients a day and screening for limited mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) cases. Telemedicine support continues to be provided. 8,070 telemedicine calls were received during the reporting period and a total of 16,375 calls have been received since the service became available. • Medication Home Deliveries: 172 home deliveries of NCD medications were made during the reporting period, bringing the total since March to 1,459. The target is to provide two months' supply of medicines for 8,000 vulnerable NCD patients (aged 65+). Door-to-door delivery for patients in Muzeirib and Jilin (Dera'a) cannot take place due to the ongoing security situation in this area. Patients there collect their medicines from the Agency HC.
<p>Gaza (GFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Cases: The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases over the reporting period was 214 cases; 177 cases were within a local community. The number of cases under compulsory quarantine was 2,187 persons in quarantine centres and 550 cases under home quarantine. • Health Centres: After detecting community transmission of COVID-19 on 24 August, lockdown was imposed throughout Gaza. All health services, including UNRWA HCs, have been closed. The Agency's telemedicine service remains operational and the number of remote consultations over the reporting period was 73,903. The number of patient visits to HCs, using the appointment system, was 118,830 just before the lockdown. Home visits for critical cases continue. • Triage Points: The number of visits to triage points over the reporting period was 54,945. • Home Deliveries: The number of home deliveries of essential medicine was 3,908 in August.
<p>West Bank (WBFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Cases: The number of COVID-19 cases reported daily in the West Bank remains high with 875 cases reported on 30 August, reducing to 500 cases a day on 1 September. The total number of cumulative confirmed cases is 30,090 (as of 31 August), including 7,209 cases in East Jerusalem. The total number of recovered cases is 20,716, including 5,454 cases in East Jerusalem. The total number of COVID-19 related fatalities is 175 deaths in the West Bank, including 21 deaths in East Jerusalem. According to the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Health (MoH) update for August, there were 20,320 persons under home quarantine. The cumulative number of refugees with COVID-19 was 3,736: 1,479 cases in the Hebron area (southern West Bank); 1,258 cases in East Jerusalem; and 999 cases in Nablus. 11,421 patients with respiratory illnesses, representing 18 percent of outpatient consultations, were triaged. 373 cases were referred to the MoH public health laboratory for COVID-19 tests. • Health Centres: The Agency HCs and Qalqilia Hospital were operating normally. Emergency preparedness plans and protocols are in place in all areas and health staff work on rotation. UNRWA continues coordinating its activities with the MoH. When COVID-19 cases are detected in HCs deep cleaning is carried out and staff on duty are sent to the MoH laboratory for tests and into quarantine. A second health team then steps in to maintain HC operations in line with the staff rotation plan during the COVID-19 crisis. • Quarantine Centres: Quarantine centres were established in coordination with the MoH as part of the national response to the pandemic. Support to these centres is provided through funds mobilized through the Agency's COVID-19 Flash Appeal. • Home Deliveries: NCD medications for 2,878 patients were delivered to homes.

COVID-19 response activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Visits: Health staff carried out home visits for 46 clients, mainly pregnant women and elderly persons who have difficulty reaching HCs. • Hotlines: HC staff provided health advice through the hotlines for 312 patients.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparations continued for the Back to Learning in cooperation with the Education Department and other Agency departments, including finalizing the PPE list for each field (face masks, alcohol-based hand gel sanitizers and soap), revision of the guidelines for Back to Learning arrangements and the dissemination of health awareness and education materials. • The Health Department completed the integration of the latest (eleventh) revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) into its e-Health system, which will facilitate the diagnosis of all diseases, including COVID-19. According to WHO, this integration is exemplary in comparison to regional and global health systems. The majority of doctors in field HCs have completed an online training course on the revision – the course was prepared by the Health Department and the Information Management and Technology Department (IMTD).



education

COVID-19 response activities

Jordan (JFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Measures: All 169 Agency schools will reopen on 1 September for 115,000 students. In line with the Government of Jordan's health protocols and social distancing measures, a blended learning modality will be applied where schools will operate two weekly shifts with half the student population in school on any one day. Students will attend school for 2.5 days each week and study from home on set assignments for the other 2.5 days to reduce numbers in each class. • Health and Safety: All school staff have been trained on health protocols to ensure students' safely. • TVET: Preparations continued for vocational courses to resume in early September and technical courses and educational training to resume in mid-October. • Back to Learning: The Agency has received textbooks for the new 2020/21 academic year from the Ministry of Education (MoE).
Lebanon (LFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to Learning: UNRWA is coordinating closely with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the education sector regarding various scenarios for the next academic year. UNRWA will attend the coordination meeting, led by the Government's COVID-19 committee and the MEHE, on 8 September. • Catch-Up: A five-week intensive summer Catch-Up programme ended in August for 8,561 school students. The Catch-Up was offered to the 30 per cent of UNRWA students who were unable to access online learning in the Self-Learning Programme (SLP) from March to June due to lack of internet access and tablets. Assistance was provided to all the families of participating children. Tablets were distributed to 1,140 students and 5,213 vulnerable families received communications assistance to pay for internet access. • Summer Learning: The summer online tutoring programme was also successfully completed. This involved 1,300 students being taught by 150 university-aged tutors who were recruited through the Agency's Cash-for-Work Youth Programme to provide educational support through group and individual tutoring sessions. The Learning Support Programme (LSP) supported classroom teachers by providing tailored interventions to help children in grades 1-3 navigate the self-learning materials, with a particular focus on reading, writing and mathematics. The Special Education Needs (SEN) team coordinated with classroom teachers to assist SEN children in their online learning by providing remote support to parents and caregivers. • TVET: The UNRWA Sibling Training Centre (STC) completed a five-week intensive summer Catch-Up

COVID-19 response activities

<p>Lebanon (LFO)</p>	<p>programme for vocational students who were unable to access online learning in the initial e-Learning programme due to connectivity barriers and was expanded to students who were unable to fully complete their e-learning programme for the same reasons. Out of those who enrolled in the programme, 81 per cent (268 STC students) actively participated. The STC student counsellor provided remote psychosocial support (PSS) interventions to support students' wellbeing and to encourage parents to motivate the students to participate in the online learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSS: School counsellors continue to provide remote PSS services, such as individual and group counselling, as well as online awareness sessions. Children and families have been engaged in several PSS activities to help them cope during these difficult times. In July, school counsellors provided 821 students and 828 caregivers with individual counselling, and 3,920 students and 3,135 caregivers attended awareness sessions. In addition, 3,708 students received "care calls" to monitor their well-being.
<p>Syria (SFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch-Up: Additional support/catch-up classes, which took place ahead of the exams in June, proved to be very helpful. Palestine refugee ninth students finished their exams and achieved an average 90.56 per cent pass rate. Out of 4,289 students, 3,884 passed and only 405 failed. Eleven Agency schools (two in Dera'a and nine in Damascus) scored a 100 per cent pass rate. • Back to Learning: The beginning of the new school year was planned for 1 September, but has been postponed by the MoE and is currently set for 13 September. The UNRWA back-to-learning preparations are ongoing. Class formations will take into consideration COVID-19 preventative measures, particularly physical distancing, and the education department is looking into five different scenarios for the beginning of the new school year and preparing self-learning materials for the parts of the curriculum that have not yet been covered. The procurement of 105,000 masks for students and education staff is ongoing. • TVET: Registration for the new academic year 2020/21 began on 25 August 2020 and all COVID-19 prevention safety measures were put in place during the registration process. On 6 September, TVET will resume short-term courses that were suspended mid-March. Graduation for Damascus Training Centre (DTC) students is planned in the first week of September and the new academic year will start on 20 September. Ten newly-graduated female students in the fashion design and dress-making course in Damascus and Homs, and 54 current students (43 females and 11 males), have participated in the production of 4,000 reusable masks. The masks are being used by DTC students and teachers in Damascus and other areas.
<p>Gaza (GFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to Learning: Initial class formations for catch-up and back-to-learning while COVID-19 restrictions remain in force has been agreed. The average number of 41 students in each class will remain the same as last year and COVID-19 health measures will be put in place. • Catch-Up: Agency schools started the catch-up period on 8 August, in line with government schools, in order to complete the previous academic year (2019/20) before officially starting the new school year (2020/21) in September. However, due to the detection of a local outbreak of COVID-19 in Gaza since 24 August, the education programme has been scaling up distance learning. • School statistics in Gaza (as of 31 August 2020): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 285,768 UNRWA students (147,621 boys, 138,147 girls) are enrolled at 277 Agency schools for the 2020/21 academic year. This is an increase of 3,408 students over the previous year. There are 8,905 teachers led by 577 school principals and deputy principals. • Students are accommodated in 180 school buildings, including three schools from the Palestinian Authority (PA). 84 schools operate single shifts and 193 schools operate on double shifts. • The registration process for new first grade children for the new school year 2020/21 started in the beginning of March; 33,073 refugee students (17,345 boys, 15,728 girls) have now been registered. • TVET: The TVET catch-up period, to complete the second semester for 2019/20, was successfully achieved from 21 July to 20 August.

COVID-19 response activities

<p>West Bank (WBFO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to Learning: The new academic year 2020/21 will begin as planned on 6 September. According to the MoE, children in first through fourth grade will start school on 6 September, while students in grades 5-12 will start two weeks later. Cleaning campaigns are being prepared for all Agency schools prior to the reopening. Training and coaching for education staff has been completed. Maintenance work was ongoing at several school facilities to ensure they are equipped with proper safety and hygiene supplies. SOPs to deal with suspected COVID-19 cases among school students are being finalized.
<p>HQ Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Cases: The additional needs of the Fields to implement physical distancing and healthy hygiene practices in UNRWA education facilities have been captured in the Agency's updated COVID-19 Flash Appeal. These needs include additional teachers, more school attendants, as well as specific hygiene and sanitation materials. The key work of this period has been ensuring that UNRWA responds to the findings of the key Agency wide studies and surveys, in terms of the level of students' access to technology; teacher support during the remote learning period and the most appropriate online platform and social media tools to support students learning. These findings are key for determining the modality of the student Catch Up and, crucially, for Back to Learning in the 2020/2021 academic year. Similarly work on the five key areas of the COVID-19 education response continued: • Self-learning and curriculum materials: The Curriculum team has been supporting the review of the learning materials that the Fields developed for student Catch Up Programmes, particularly in Gaza. The team has also been following up with the field offices on the availability of new school textbooks – and also initiating any subsequent reviews – for the coming school year as the COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays in the production of school textbooks in some of the Fields. • PSS, Safety and Hygiene: HQ Education is having follow up discussions with field offices on their implementation of the "COVID-19: Protocol for the safe and healthy reopening of UNRWA Education Institutions", which was shared at the end of July 2020 in preparation for the reopening of schools. HQ Education finalized and disseminated the booklet "Activities and games for children's well-being in times of lockdown and school closure". The booklet has games and activities suitable for children during and post COVID-19. The selected games and activities are categorized into three sections: health, PSS/well-being and social relationships. A checklist is also included for the quality assurance of PSS and health games and activities to support Fields as they develop more games and activities. • TVET: TVET HQ has been working with the Fields on their emergency response and is collecting inputs to consolidate updates on progress made. TVET HQ developed and finalized a monitoring tool to collect data on VTCs COVID-19 response and the analysis process of the data collected has started. In addition to the work on the COVID-19 response, TVET Norms and Standards have been developed and discussions on their implementation are now taking place. • Monitoring and Evaluation: Following discussions on the findings from the Agency-wide studies on students' technological access and on the tools already in use across the Fields, meetings were held with IMTD and education stakeholders on the way forward. It was agreed that an Agency-wide Content Hub would be developed to ensure child safeguarding, feasible bandwidth requirement and possibility for interactive learning. An Agency-wide EdTech Task Force was also established to steer the way forward with regard to the use of technology to support children's learning. The findings on the role of the teachers – from phone interviews with teachers – have been analyzed and these are being cross referenced with other sources on information. A Concept Note for an Agency-wide COVID-19 Student Survey has been drafted and plans will be discussed with the Fields in the coming weeks with the goal of conducting the survey when students are physically back in school in each Field. • Partnerships and Funding: UNRWA Education continued to contribute to regional and global discourse and planning for education in COVID-19. A key input was made on indicators to an INEE workshop organized on "Monitoring and Evaluation of Distance Learning Programmes during



Third grader Areej Hassan washes her hands during her first day 'Back to Learning' at the UNRWA Ein Ghazal School in Dummar, Syria. © 2020 UNRWA Photo by Taghrid Mohammed.

COVID-19 response activities	
	<p>COVID-19" in mid-August. UNRWA Education HQ continues to engage with the regional Inter-Agency UN Group, focusing now on the preparation of the fourth Regional Webinar on Reaching Out to the Most Vulnerable planned for 3 September. Preparations are also underway for a regional Back to Learning Campaign with a joint message to be developed and signed by UN agencies with respect to Back to Learning within the COVID-19 context. In addition, a "Back to Learning Song" is under development. A regional ministerial meeting is planned to take place in the early Autumn to reflect on the experience of Back to Learning to-date.</p> <p>Priorities</p> <p>Monitoring and Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalizing the report on the Teacher Support Study and sharing findings with the Fields. • Sharing the Concept Note for the COVID-19 Student Survey with the Fields and support Field planning for implementation. • Implement the COVID-19 Student Survey questionnaire. <p>TVET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating the Field Emergency Response plans. • Analyzing the data collected by the VTCs on the Emergency Response. <p>Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support to securing the additional resources needed for Back to Learning within the COVID-19 context.



A Palestine refugee receives cash assistance from a designated shop in Jabal Al Beddawi, Lebanon. © 2020 UNRWA Photo by Maysoun Mustafa



relief and social services (rss)

COVID-19 response activities	
Jordan (JFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Cash Assistance: Distribution of COVID-19 one-time cash assistance started for 1,116 Social Safety Net (SSN) Ex-Gazan families who are receiving JD 100 top-up to their regular third quarter (Q3) cash distribution, using e-cards implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) through the Jordan Ahli Bank (JAB). Non-SSN eligible Ex-Gazan families will receive JD 100 per family through the Jordan Post Company. • COVID-Awareness: Agency social workers continued contacting refugee families, including Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) families, by phone and WhatsApp, to provide health awareness messages, support and advice on available emergency hotlines.
Lebanon (LFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Cash Assistance: LFO completed the first distribution of emergency cash assistance to the refugee community during the reporting period. As of 24 August, 90,490 families received assistance of US\$ 35 for each family present in Lebanon to provide additional support during Lebanon's worst economic crisis in decades. • Multi-Purpose Cash and Cash for Food: PRS standard multi-purpose cash assistance (MCPA) and cash-for-food assistance for August was transferred on 18 August. PRS are receiving LBP 390,000 per family as MPCA, and LBP 70,000 per person as food assistance. • Refugee Registration: Regular social work interventions and registration services have been suspended with the exception of urgent cases, which are handled remotely. An online application service was launched for refugees to submit the registration requests online.
Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash Assistance: The second round of cash assistance closed on 30 July with 414,615 beneficiaries (99.1 per cent) receiving this support. Discussions on how to proceed for the third cash round are ongoing. • Food Assistance: 54,338 families (144,232 individuals) received their food basket during the first distribution round, which was completed on 23 July. Procurement for the second round, scheduled to start in September, has been completed. • Refugee Registration: A total of 11,756 refugee registrations have been logged; 86 applications were received during the reporting period. The RSS programme has started working on an online registration application to update the data.

COVID-19 response activities	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosocial Support: 923 refugees were contacted through WhatsApp or by phone, including 536 elderly people, 154 persons with disabilities and 233 GBV cases. Eighty-nine refugees were provided with family support office services during the reporting period. The RSS programme is developing a special COVID-19 case management form and system. • Assessments: The assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on Palestine refugees in Syria was finalized and shared with UNRWA HQ for feedback. The assessment includes information collected through key informant interviews and provides recommendations for the months ahead.
Gaza (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Assistance: A second round of food distribution was completed and a third was started over the reporting period. However, due to the sudden lockdown the third round was suspended on 24 August. The total number of families who have so far received their food baskets was 38,338. • Hotlines: Hotlines continue to operate while RSSP remain closed: 3,599 calls and 767 emails were received from refugees during August, mainly concerning food distribution. • Psychosocial Support: Four refugees with confirmed COVID-19 received PSS phone consultations by area social worker supervisors. Social workers continue to provide remote social work interventions and PSS services to the most vulnerable groups. • Refugee Registration: Refugees are now able to access the online registration system. • Disability Support: The Agency's Rehabilitation Centre for the Visually Impaired (RCVI) in Gaza was closed on 25 August in line with the closure of other educational institutions.
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarantine Support: Food baskets (3,108) and hygiene kits (1,727) were distributed to quarantined families in all areas of the West Bank. Hygiene kits were upgraded with items appropriate for elderly persons, women, children, persons with disabilities and people in COVID-19 isolation centres. • Food Assistance: The Agency's joint project with WFP for the distribution of 10,000 food parcels for Bedouin and other herder communities throughout the West Bank covered 3,243 families. • Cash Assistance: Due to funding shortages, no families have been provided with emergency cash assistance to cope with the COVID-19 financial crisis. • Psychosocial Support: Remote services are being provided to families and individuals affected by COVID-19, including PSS support and awareness sessions. The RSS team reached out to 772 families, 274 women and 498 people with special needs and disabilities to check on their well-being and to assess their needs. • Crisis Intervention Unit: The CIU conducted 349 over-the-phone assessments through the hotline and followed up with 377 families impacted by armed conflict and forcible displacement in different areas in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including three in Jenin camp. • Family and Child Protection: CFPP continued to provide protection-related services for GBV and child protection cases. During COVID-19 crisis, GBV cases have increased GBV. CFPP followed up on 326 cases, including 22 new cases (11 GBV and 11 child protection cases).
HQ Programme	<p>Staff care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A counseling service remains available to Area staff in all five Fields and HQ Amman to provide additional support with issues arising from the COVID-19 crisis. This service is confidential and free of charge. • A counseling service for international staff continues to be available to all international staff in all Fields and HQ Amman upon request. This service is provided by external clinical psychologists and is confidential and free of charge.



COVID-19 response activities	
Jordan (JFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixteen protection cases were recorded and follow-up was made with referrals to relevant programmes. • Regular visits to the King Abdullah Park (KAP) refugee camp (Irbid) continued and meetings have been held between the Agency's protection team, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and ACTED regarding legal documentation issues for PRS residents.
Lebanon (LFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Aid: UNRWA continues to provide remote legal aid counseling, legal assistance and representation. The Agency's in-person legal awareness sessions remain suspended. However, the legal aid unit continues to conduct Skype trainings on labour law, which has involved 430 youth since the start of the lockdown.
Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpline: The number of calls received on the helpline decreased considerably during July and August when distributions ended. In total the helpline has received 3,235 calls since the system was put in place early April. • Family Support Offices: FSOs have remained open in all areas to ensure that gender-based violence (GBV) and legal support services continue to be provided. • Protection Monitoring: Monitoring of the protection situation and political developments affecting access is ongoing. Access issues have been minor and limited to sporadic problems in Muzeirib and Jilin (Dera'a), where tensions remain high and roads can be temporarily blocked. • Assessments: A socio-economic assessment and study summarizing the impacts of COVID-19 on Agency services and programmes was finalized. The assessment highlights the increase in negative coping mechanisms among Palestine refugees, such as withdrawing children from school (including from distance learning), child labour, early marriage, as well as potential involvement in exploitative or dangerous employment, all exacerbated by the current situation (displacement, limited child protection and GBV services overall, disruption of existing services). The assessment also highlights the risk of increased GBV and domestic violence and documents increases in irritability and aggressive behaviour towards vulnerable groups, particularly by frustrated breadwinners. It further highlights the reduction in the number of refugees returning to the country and concludes that this trend is likely to continue. • Protection Activities/Training: In-person protection activities for particularly vulnerable Palestine refugees have remained suspended. In-person trainings have resumed with a focus on ending violence against children (EVAC). Very strict COVID-19 preventative measures are being taken and there are only a small number of trainees per session. Online training options have been further developed and will be used if in-person training sessions have to be suspended again.
Gaza (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work focussed almost exclusively on mitigating COVID-19 protection-related risks and continuing to mainstream protection principles into field responses. Protection risks are expected to increase significantly in the coming weeks and months. • Regular neutrality inspections at Agency installations were temporarily suspended due to the lockdown. Inspections are taking place if and when movement restrictions permit.
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Protection team provided guidance and support to the Gaza Field team on responding to the sudden COVID-19 community transmission and subsequent lockdown. • Inputs were provided to donor briefings (SIDA/ECHO) on current protection trends, including in relation to COVID-19. • COVID-19 messaging is being updated in collaboration with the Risk Communications and Community Engagement Team (UNICEF/WHO).

COVID-19 response activities

HQ Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Protection Division supported the Arabic translation of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) “Key Messages – COVID-19 Response: Applying the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action”. It provides an overview of the factors that may put persons with disabilities at heightened risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, guidelines for response in humanitarian settings and actions to address the risks. • Contributions were also made to the finalization of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) case studies in the COVID-19 response that highlights the impact on persons with disabilities and outlines key actions and recommendations to make the response and recovery inclusive of persons with disabilities. • Support was provided to the Jordan and Syria field offices on the integration of gender, disability and protection considerations in their rapid assessments of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, given that the pandemic is affecting vulnerable groups in different ways. Support will be given to JFO to follow up on its assessment, which will have a special focus on gender and disability in collaboration with UN Women.
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infrastructure & camp improvement (icip)

COVID-19 response activities

Jordan (JFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiary selection for shelter reconstruction/rehabilitation projects in Talbieh, Husn and Jerash camps has continued. • The preliminary design for two school constructions in Irbid has been prepared and is being reviewed before the final design is submitted to Irbid municipality for approval. • Four construction projects (Zohour HC, Zarqa HC, Zohour School, Amman New Camp School) are ongoing. In addition, two projects (Talbyieh School and Awajan HC) are under tender.
Lebanon (LFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter rehabilitation, installation management and infrastructure work has resumed. On-site staff is at the recommended capacity of 75 percent in line with Government recommendations.
Syria (SFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation services in the nine official camps and one unofficial camp are carried out daily in addition to disinfection activities (UNRWA facilities and streets). Additional disinfection services are provided for Palestinian gatherings that are not supported by the local municipalities and during the reporting period, Khirbet al-Shayyab (Rif Damascus) was included. • Garbage collection points continue to be disinfected along with larger areas in the camps.
Gaza (GFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total volume of solid waste collected from camps over the reporting period was 7,400 tons. • Around 270,000 m3 of water was pumped from nine water wells (seven in Jabalia, one in Khan Younis and one in Rafah) over the reporting period. • Seventy-one families received payments for their shelter repair or construction work. Thirteen families were visited by ICIP engineers to follow up on the progress of their shelter repair or reconstruction.
West Bank (WBFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance works for Back to Learning in the schools were ongoing and several projects were completed ahead of the school opening on 6 September. • Solid waste management works continued as planned and sanitation labourers have started preparations for the winter. • Construction projects in all areas were ongoing.



An UNRWA sanitation worker in Balata camp in Nablus, West Bank during the COVID-19 pandemic. © 2020 UNRWA Photo by Louise Wateridge.

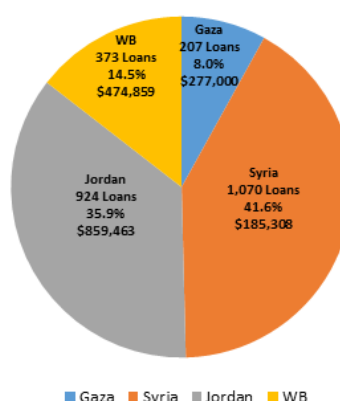


COVID-19 response activities

Fields & HQ Departments

- On 25 August, all microfinance offices and branches in Gaza were closed due to the COVID-19 crisis. MD branches in the other three Fields where the programme operates (Jordan, Syria and West Bank) were opened through July-August for the collection of payments, loan disbursements and low-profile lending activities.
- The operation team continued to monitor developments in the four Fields (West Bank, Gaza, Jordan and Syria) to provide updated information on the most affected sectors of the local economies in order to adjust work plans accordingly.
- During the reporting period (22 July-31 August), MD disbursed a total of 2,574 loans valued at US\$ 1,796,630 in the four area of operations (Jordan 35.9 per cent; Syria 41.6 per cent; West Bank 14.5 per cent; Gaza 8 per cent). In terms of loan values this translates as: Jordan 47.8 per cent; Syria 10.3 per cent (due to the currency devaluation of the Syrian pound); West Bank 26.4 per cent; and Gaza 15.4 per cent.

Loans disbursed form 22 July - 31 August 2020



Priorities

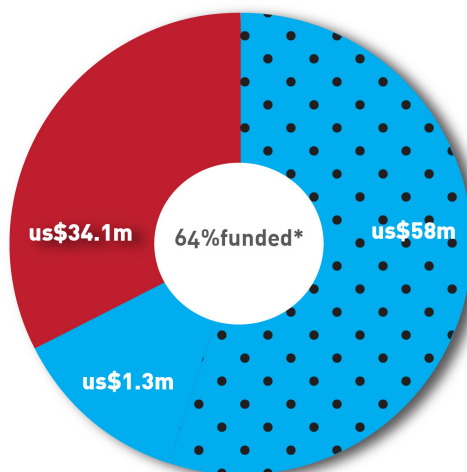
- Gradually increase loan disbursement for client groups in need of financing based on the programme assessment of each field/business sector individually.
- Continue looking for interested donor(s) to finance the MD proposed intervention to support a trust fund that would enable MD to expand its outreach to targeted clients in the MD four area of operations.

funding

Launch of UNRWA COVID-19 Appeal August-December 2020

UNRWA launched a new US\$ 94.6 million [COVID-19 Appeal](#). This funding is required by the Agency to mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic on Palestine refugees in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip until the end of December 2020, with a special focus on health, cash assistance and education.

covid-19 flash appeal**



us\$93.4 million***
current requirement



* Confirmed pledges for the UNRWA COVID-19 Flash Appeal include US\$ 2.6 million in funds re-allocated from previous pledges.

** Percentage of confirmed, non-disbursed pledges and received funds against the annual requirement.

*** COVID-19 Flash Appeal figures include funding and needs from March to August 2020. US\$ 94.6 million needed for the COVID-19 humanitarian appeal from August through December 2020 will be included in the next update.

Funding status as of 26 August 2020.



united nations relief and works agency
for palestine refugees in the near east

www.unrwa.org

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5.6 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and the Gaza Strip to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions

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