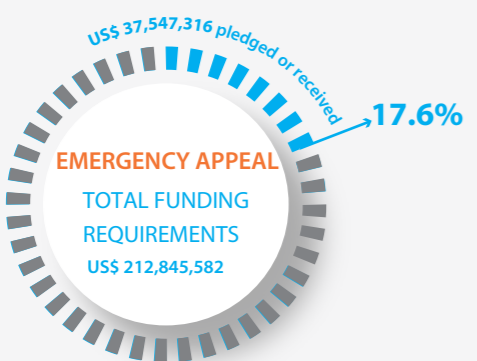




# syria: unrwa - progress highlights january-june 2020



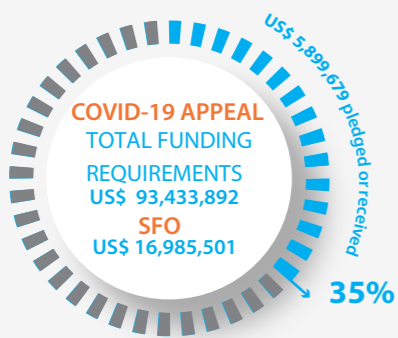
## Emergency Appeal Funding Level

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 June 2020, a total of US\$ 37.5 million were pledged or received from donors and partners, representing 17.6 per cent of total requirements.

## Socioeconomic Challenges

The first half of 2020 witnessed a significant depreciation of the Syrian pound (SYP), which has dwindled to a historic low value reaching SYP 3,000 for US\$ 1 in June. Consequently, prices of essential goods including food and NFIs have surged, thus further impacting a population already struggling to meet their basic needs. In particular, food prices have reached record levels, with a 231 per cent increase reported in the estimated cost of the national average reference food basket between October 2019 and June 2020.



## COVID-19 FLASH Appeal Funding Level

As of 30 June, the US\$ 93.4 million updated COVID-19 Flash Appeal was 35 per cent funded (including confirmed pledges), with the Syria portion being 35 per cent funded (including confirmed pledges).

## Socioeconomic Challenges

Since mid-March 2020, the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 has already affected large segments of the population in Syria, including Palestine refugees. COVID-19 related preventative measures have added to the consistent macroeconomic decline of recent years. Travel restrictions, closure of business, imposed curfews and other preventative measures have resulted in loss of income and livelihoods for thousands of households, with daily paid workers being particularly impacted. The public health system in Syria has been extremely fragile due to the prolonged crisis and would require considerable support to reinforce its capacity to respond should an outbreak of COVID-19 cases occurs.

Cash assistance 412K Palestine refugees reached	UNRWA students 49K	Primary health consultations 319K	Legal assistance 1.1K Palestine refugees reached
In-kind food assistance 145K Palestine refugees reached	UNRWA-run schools 103	UNRWA-run health facilities 25 including 2 mobile clinics	Mine risk awareness 4.8K Palestine refugees reached
In-kind WASH Items 20K Palestine refugees reached	UNRWA 9 <sup>th</sup> graders success rate 90.5%	Dental consultations 34.5K	Psychosocial support 42K Palestine refugees reached

## COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Palestine Refugees and UNRWA Response

- All 25 UNRWA health facilities operated a triage system for patients with respiratory symptoms, while hotlines to provide telemedicine were set up recording more than 3,900 calls as of June; in addition, approximately 1,000 door-to-door visits were conducted in order to provide medicines to vulnerable NCD patients.
- The duration of the first round of cash distribution was extended and the number of food distribution points was increased to minimize the risk of overcrowding. A one-off payment of US\$ 10 was added to the second round of cash assistance to help mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the crisis.
- UNRWA schools remained closed from mid-March until the end of the scholastic year. Online self-learning material was accessed by more than 73 per cent of UNRWA students while about 10,000 students in Neirab, Khan Danoun, Khan Eshieh, Ein el Tal camps and Ramadan gathering were provided with self-learning material in hard copies due to internet connectivity challenges.
- Sanitation services in ten operationally accessible Palestine refugee camps (nine official and one unofficial in Latakia) were carried out daily in addition to regular disinfection activities.
- Eight helplines, providing information on humanitarian assistance, relief and social services, education and health were set up to allow Palestine refugees to make their queries remotely. Protection interventions were adapted including the provision of telephone-based and online psycho-social support services targeting the most vulnerable persons with a focus on older persons and persons with disabilities.

## UNRWA in Action

Maryam Ibrahim is a 15 year-old UNRWA student from Ein el Tal camp in Aleppo. In April 2013, armed groups entered the camp, leading to the displacement of the entire population, including Maryam and her family. In June 2017, Maryam and her family, like other extremely vulnerable refugees, returned to Ein el Tal, despite the lack of basic infrastructure. As they cannot afford to pay rent, the family is currently hosted by relatives, in a partially destroyed house. Families in the camp continue to receive services provided to Palestine refugees by UNRWA in Syria. Maryam describes how she benefited from educational support despite the school closure in mid-March: "When the schools closed because of COVID-19, I was very worried that I wouldn't be able to follow the distance learning. In our house, we don't have electricity and my family can't afford internet costs. I was very grateful when UNRWA brought all the needed learning material to my home and stayed in contact with me to make sure I was able to follow the classes remotely. I'm in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade now, and I would like to become an artist like my sister, who is a student at the Faculty of Fine Arts. Her beautiful drawings on the walls of our house make it a nice place, despite the damage and destruction." Shortly after this interview, Maryam successfully passed her exam.



Maryam Ibrahim, a 15 year-old UNRWA student from Ein el Tal camp. © 2020 UNRWA photo

438,000  
Palestine refugees remaining in Syria

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

40%  
of refugees remain displaced within Syria

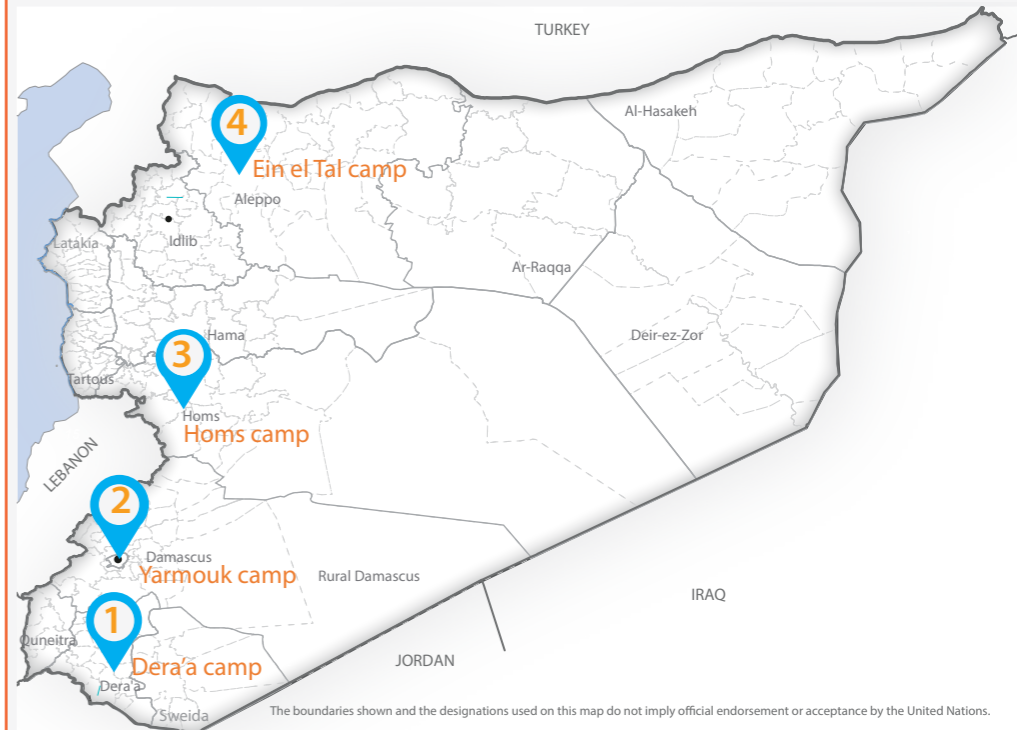
700  
Palestine refugees returned from Lebanon and Jordan

133,890  
Palestine refugees belong to the most vulnerable categories

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

## Context Update:

- Dera'a:** On the evening of 28 February, two Palestine refugees were killed by an improvised explosive device (IED) while walking back to their home in Dera'a camp. Tension between government forces and non-state armed groups has mounted in Dera'a governorate, with reconciliation agreements being increasingly fragile. On 19 March, an UNRWA staff member was killed following an outbreak of armed violence in Jillin rural Dera'a; the same incident claimed the lives of a 13 year-old UNRWA student, together with his 10 year-old cousin.
- Yarmouk camp:** The largest and once most populated camp for Palestine refugees in Syria remains in ruins. A reorganizational plan was announced in June 2020 by authorities stating that Yarmouk camp will be divided into three areas. Around 57,000 petitions were submitted by former residents to contest the plan. No formal announcement has been made since then by authorities, making it difficult to predict future developments.
- Homs camp:** On 1 May, the UNRWA Al Shajara School in Homs Palestine refugee camp was hit by shrapnel from an explosion nearby outside the camp, causing damage to the roof of at least one of its classrooms. The school was empty at the time of the incident, as were all 103 UNRWA schools across Syria, due to measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Ein el Tal camp:** A small number of extremely vulnerable families has returned to the camp; however, basic infrastructure, including water supply and electricity, has not been restored, impeding the majority of Palestine refugee families from returning and delaying plans for the rehabilitation of UNRWA facilities.



The boundaries shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.