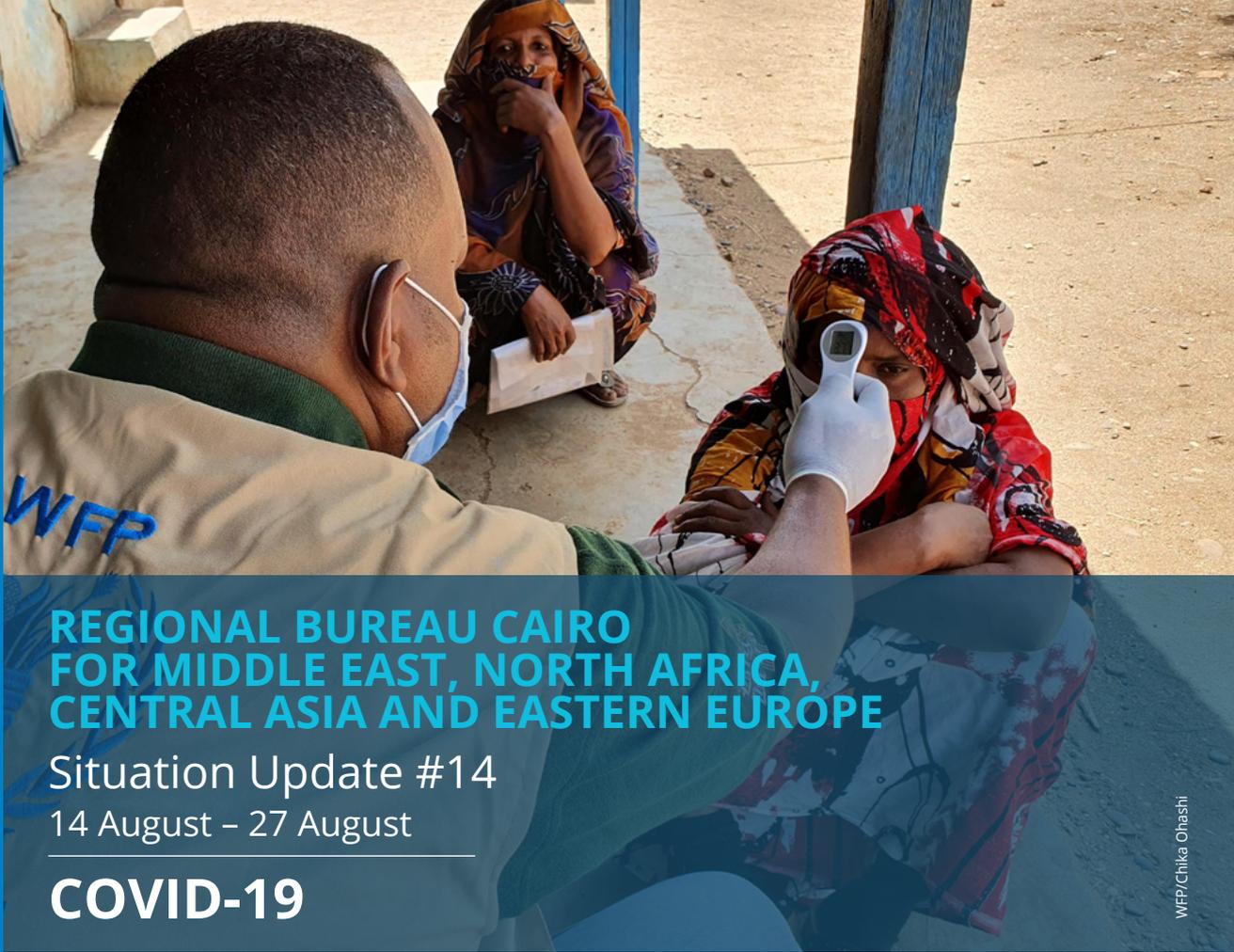




World Food Programme



WFP/Chika Ohashi

REGIONAL BUREAU CAIRO FOR MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

Situation Update #14

14 August – 27 August

COVID-19

Algeria Armenia Egypt Iran Iraq Jordan Kyrgyzstan Lebanon Libya Morocco Palestine Sudan Syria Tajikistan Tunisia Turkey Yemen

HIGHLIGHTS

As of 6 September, there were 1,325,001 reported cases of COVID-19 within the countries in which WFP is active in the region. There has been a 13 percent increase in cases over the last two weeks (24 August – 6 September) and a 31 percent increase in cases over the last month (9 August – 6 September).

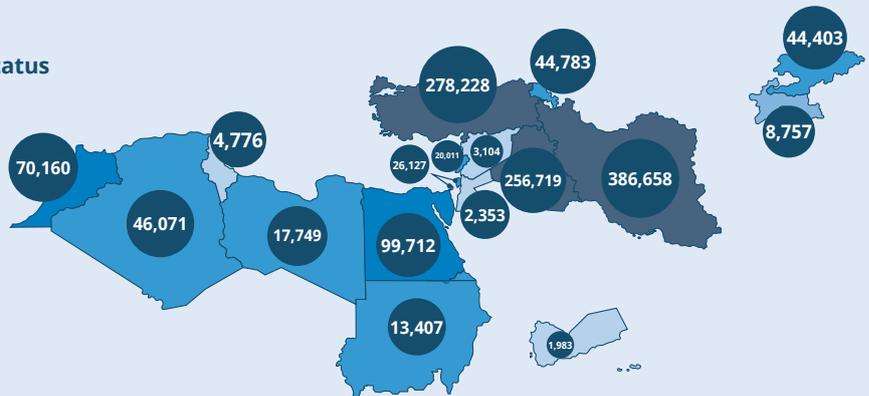
As schools in the region begin reopening, WFP is collaborating with host governments and other agencies for a safe start to the new academic year and recommencing school feeding activities.

A total of USD 1.50 billion is required to maintain WFP activities in the region for the next six months (September 2020 to February 2021). This represents 59 percent of the total requirements for the same period (of USD 2.57 billion).

COVID-19 Regional Status 6 September 2020

-  >100,000
-  >50,000
-  >10,000
-  >5,000
-  >1,000
-  >0

 COVID-19 cases



SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP RESPONSE

Social Protection

WFP continues to provide assistance to vulnerable populations to support their needs. In Egypt, WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS), concluded its first monthly cycle of support for about 40,000 children under two years of age with an unconditional monthly cash top-up of EGP 200 to the 'Takaful & Karama' national social protection programme. This support aims to minimize the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on poor families with young children.

Livelihood Programmes

Across the region, WFP country offices continue to sustain ongoing livelihood operations, where possible through resumption of activities or alternative training delivery mechanisms. In Iraq, food assistance for assets activities have gradually resumed and are moving forward in line with necessary government guidelines and WFP standard operating procedures regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, four emergency cash-for-work (CFW) projects have started in four locations to support the livelihoods of vulnerable urban communities affected by the pandemic. Similarly, in Tajikistan, WFP is implementing a CFW programme to support vulnerable households in four districts of GBAO (Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region) to cope with the socio-economic shocks caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. WFP and its cooperating partners are involving target households in public work, making sure that COVID-19 preventive measures are applied. The initiative is expected to assist 15,000 beneficiaries.

Nutrition

WFP continues to raise public awareness using key messages to promote ways to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on nutrition. In Palestine, the "Nutrition Awareness and Cash Based Transfer" project is ongoing in the southern West Bank. Since the beginning of the project in July, WFP has delivered five WhatsApp sessions under Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) activities aiming to positively influence behaviours and improve the health and nutrition of vulnerable Palestinians. Among the five sessions, there was a focus on precautionary measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as social distancing and cleaning as key preventative measures to avoid infection during pregnancy.



Deir Hafer is located 60km from Aleppo, Syria and 12km from the nearest market, so the 800 people who live here rely heavily on food assistance from WFP to meet their daily needs.

WFP/Khudr Alissa

Cash-based Transfers

Cash-Based Transfers remains a key assistance mechanism in adjusting or expanding WFP's activities in response to COVID-19. WFP Egypt's third, and last, cycle of its emergency support to the Ministry of Manpower for an EGP 500 monthly cash assistance targeting about 50,000 casual workers was completed. In Iran, WFP authorized an ad-hoc 1 million Rial per person (USD 5) cash top-up for all inhabitants in Saveh settlement upon the request of the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs and UNHCR. Since the beginning of the pandemic in Iran, inhabitants of seven settlements that have been put under quarantine due to cases of COVID-19 have received cash top-up during the lockdown to maintain adequate levels of food consumption.

School Feeding

WFP is closely monitoring the reopening of schools in the region in order to safely commence school feeding activities. In Armenia, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MoESS) announced that schools will be opened 6 days per week, instead of 5 days. WFP Armenia is, therefore, communicating with the MoESS to develop the best strategy for organizing the school feeding programme when schools start on 15 September. In Kyrgyzstan, schools will open in the first quarter of the new school year only for first grade schoolchildren, with other grades studying remotely. WFP Kyrgyzstan School Feeding Programme has developed a contingency plan to ensure that the Programme will be flexible to respond to the several scenarios of how schools will function in the first half-year of the academic year 2020-2021. This plan includes a School Meals at Home campaign with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Social and Industrial Foodservice Institute in which schoolchildren and their parents will receive awareness raising and social behaviour change materials related to child health and nutrition.

Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping VAM

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the prices of staple food commodities, which has affected the cost of food baskets in the region. A recent WFP study compared the cost of food baskets in the first and second quarter of 2020. The results are categorized using an impact code to show the severity of changes. Seven countries in the region had a 'severe' impact on the cost of food baskets, indicating more than 10 percent change in the cost. These countries include Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan. Notably, Yemen had a 'high' impact on the cost of food baskets, whereby the change observed was between five and ten percent.

Supply Chain

WFP Supply Chain has been essential in responding to emergencies in the region. Following the Beirut Port explosion in Lebanon, WFP provided emergency in-kind food assistance to 5,416 people most in need through the distribution of over 1,000 food parcels. Furthermore, offloading of 12,500 mt of wheat flour has begun at Beirut port and is being transported to warehouses before further distribution to millers and bakeries. The wheat flour will support national efforts to stabilize the price of bread across the country and ensure continuity of the bread supply. Moreover, to continue efforts in mitigating the spread of the virus, the WFP-led Logistics Cluster has been essential in facilitating the movement of humanitarian assistance by humanitarian actors and donors. In Palestine, since July, the Logistics Cluster has processed 67 requests for coordination of COVID-19 related commodities, including medical supplies and personal protective equipment.



A B727 plane carrying cargo for the humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Yemen is unloaded at Sana'a airport on 22 May 2020.

WFP/Ebrahim Al Rawni



Workers stack bags of WFP food at the Karageusian Center in Beirut, Lebanon.

WFP/Ziad Rizkallah

COMMON SERVICES

Since 1 August, WFP has operated 45 flights transporting 335 passengers and serving 6 destinations in the region (Algiers, Amman, Baghdad, Bishkek, Dushanbe and Erbil). Furthermore, as of 21 August, 5,491 m³ of humanitarian and health items related to COVID-19 have been dispatched in the region, as well as 4,381 m³ of COVID-19 essential cargo. With the resumption of safe commercial flights, passenger services are being scaled down in the Middle East, Europe, and East and West Africa. WFP operated its last flight between Sharjah-Addis Ababa on 18 August and Sharjah-Baghdad-Erbil on 19 August, while Amman, Bishkek, Dushanbe and Yerevan remain as regular scheduled routes in the region, with Algiers being served on an ad-hoc basis.

INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

WFP continues to partner with other UN agencies for a joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Syria, as part of the Health Sector-led response to COVID-19, WFP, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) has so far provided food assistance to more than 10,000 people in quarantine centres in Aleppo, Deir Ezzor, Homs, Lattakia, Rural Damascus, and Tartous governorate. Moreover, in north-western Syria, WFP and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) have commenced a partnership to increase outreach on COVID-19-related health messaging in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to beneficiaries. WFP is also working in close coordination with WHO to improve awareness on COVID-19 through WHO health teams at food distribution points.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

The region's total requirements for the next six months (September 2020 to February 2021) amount to USD 2.6 billion. Though WFP has achieved a funding level of around 41 percent thanks to support from donors, there is still a funding gap of USD 1.5 billion. Countries with the highest funding shortfalls are Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Sudan. Timely and predictable contributions remain critical to avert pipeline breaks and ensure continuity of WFP's assistance to the most vulnerable people across the region. WFP encourages all partners to allow the utmost flexibility of resources to ensure WFP can provide a dynamic response and prioritize the most urgent needs.



In Syria, WFP and UNICEF began distributing bars of soap (provided by UNICEF) along with WFP's monthly general food distribution to help families to stay healthy during COVID-19. Close to 4.7 million people will receive this soap, that was distributed by WFP.

WFP/Ali Habib

Contacts

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