

Briefing paper

UN announces largest ever humanitarian appeal for Syria

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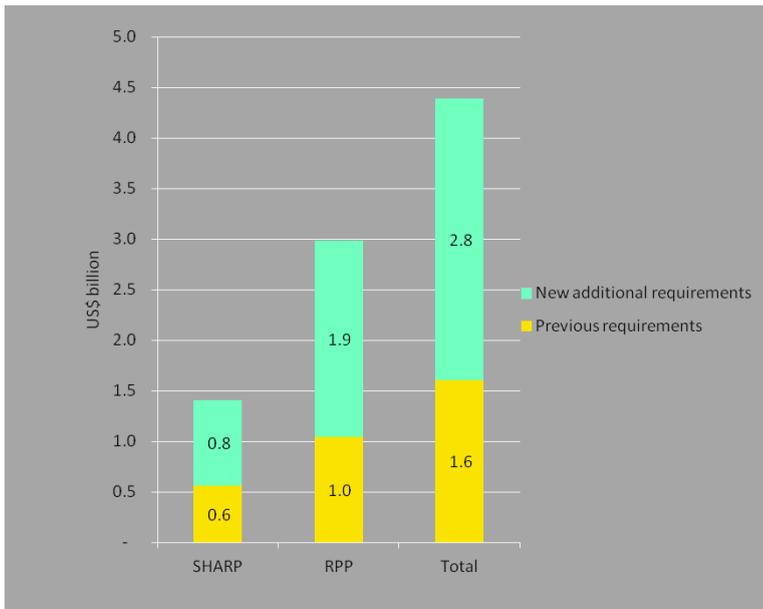
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Revised requirements and new appeals

On Friday, 7 June 2013, the United Nations announced a new appeal for Syria – the largest ever to date, with total requirements reaching US\$5.2 billion for 2013. The UN has, in fact, revised its two main appeals upwards, the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) for people inside the country, and the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP) for refugees in the region.

In addition, the Governments of Lebanon and Jordan, given the increasing number of refugees coming from Syria, have appealed for US\$449 million and US\$380 million respectively. This revised figure by far exceeds the largest UN appeal in 2003, in which US\$2.2 billion was requested in response to the war in Iraq.

Figure 1: SHARP and RRP funding, 2013



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA data¹

The dramatic increase of the requirements (173% in total, 150% for SHARP and 186% for RRP; see figure above), which have nearly tripled (while the appeal period has just doubled, from 6 to 12 months), shows that needs are more than proportionally increasing. Syria's situation is deteriorating on a daily basis, with increased conflict and displacement of people resulting in a growing need for assistance. The conflict is also impacting the region more widely.

Increasing needs

In terms of the number of people in need, UN OCHA estimates it has increased by approximately 5.8 million people over the past year from 1 million; and more than 80,000 people have been killed since the onset of the conflict, on average 5,000 people each month since July 2012. One of the biggest concerns is the dramatic increase in the number of refugees (both registered and unregistered), which has exceeded original estimates (from 1.1 million to the most recent figure, 1.6 million, in June 2013).

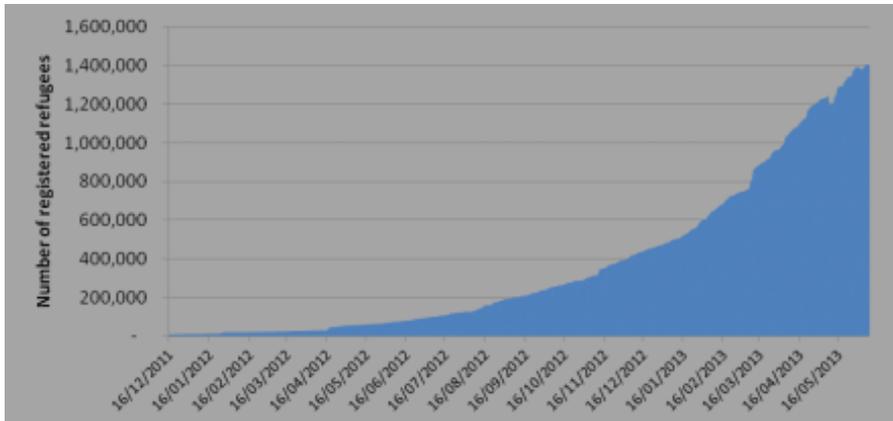
Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt

The UN projects the number of Syrian refugees to reach 3.45 million by the end of the year. The majority of refugees flee into neighbouring countries. So far, UNHCR calculates that 473,587 Syrian refugees have been registered in Jordan; 474,461 in Lebanon; 347,815 in Turkey; 147,464 in Iraq; 66,922 in Egypt as of 10 May 2013.

¹ As of 10 June 2013

Also, among the 525,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria, UNRWA estimates that 424,000 need humanitarian assistance, with the number increasing fast. The rising number of refugees is the reason for the increase in RRP requirements, which is higher than the SHARP.

Figure 2: Number of registered refugees, 2013



Source: Development Initiatives based on UNHCR data²

In addition, movement by internally displaced persons (IDPs) continues to increase, as many Syrians are displaced multiple times. Since early 2013, the UN estimates that the number of IDPs in Syria has more than doubled, from an estimated 2 million to 4.25 million people, 46% of which are children.

As previously stated, the revised requirements announced on 7 June 2013 also reflect the collapse of Syria's economy, including food scarcity, which is leading to signs of moderate to acute malnutrition in parts of the population. The appeal includes US\$1 billion that will enable the World Food Programme (WFP) to scale up its distribution of food both inside and outside Syria, which is planning to reach a total of seven million Syrians by late 2013.

In neighbouring countries, WFP will also ramp up its food aid to meet the needs of 2.7 million refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Iraq by the end of this year, mainly through food vouchers which are spent in local shops.

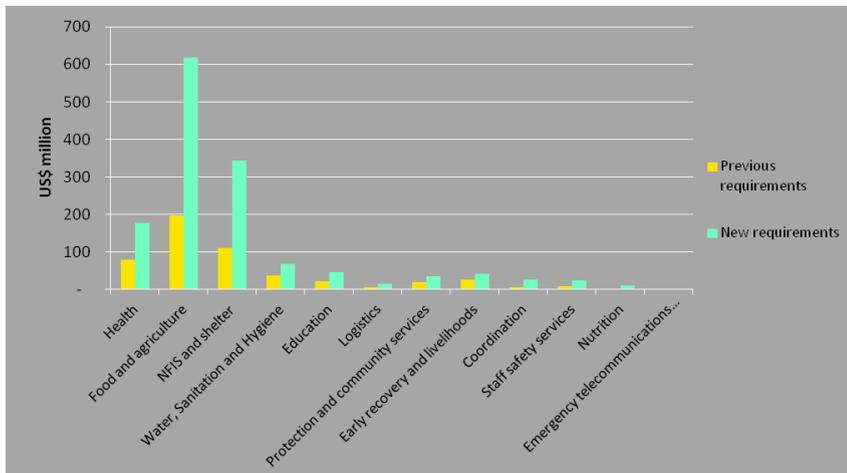
Moreover, UN OCHA warns that access to basic health care is limited, with over a third of all hospitals closed, and more than two thirds of health workers have left the country. UN agencies and their partners are aiming to reach 6.8 million people by the end of the year with a combination of medical treatment, vaccinations and medical supplies.

The increasing needs are reflected in the revised SHARP appeal; they include 4 million people in need of food rations, 10 million people in need of safe drinking water, and 5 million people in need of sanitation. This has also been reflected in upwards revised sector requirements (figure 3 below).

² As of 10 June 2013

Requirements for food and agriculture have increased by US\$421 million compared to the previous plan; while requirements for other sectors have increased more than twofold – this includes non-food items (NFIs) and shelter, coordination, staff safety services, and nutrition.

Figure 3: SHARP, sector requirements (2013)

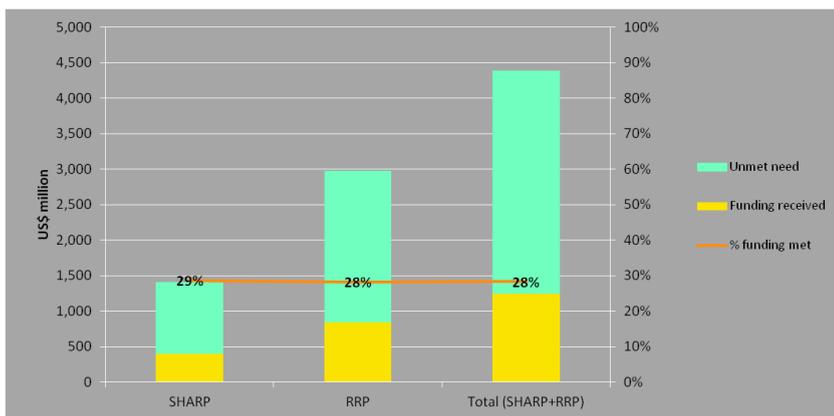


Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA data

Funding trends

As of 5 June 2013, US\$ 1.2 billion has been contributed to these two appeals, with funding of the updated RRP and SHARP standing at 29% and 28% respectively. Before the recent revision, donors were meeting 70% of the requirements (\$1.2 billion out of US\$1.6 billion required).

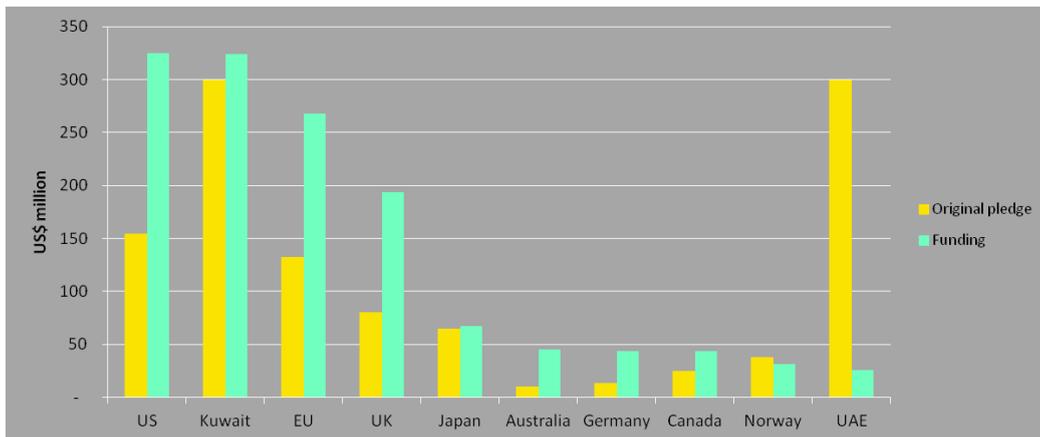
Figure 4: SHARP and RRP funding, 2013



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS data³

The donor response is interesting. The United States, Kuwait and ECHO have contributed the largest volumes of humanitarian assistance so far in 2013. They have also contributed what they originally pledged at the January 2013 conference in Kuwait. On the other hand, an important Gulf State donor such as the United Arab Emirates, has not yet committed the money it pledged.

Figure 5: Top 10 donor contributions to the Syria crisis, 2013



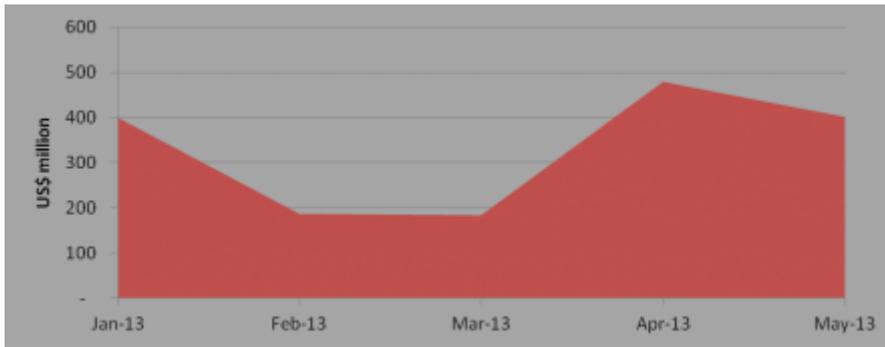
Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS data⁴

The timing of the response is crucial. After low levels of funding in February and March 2013, volumes picked up in April and May (figure 6 below). Donors will need to maintain (and slightly increase) funding levels of the last two months to meet current needs.

³ As of 10 June 2013

⁴ As of 10 June 2013. Values include contributions to the SHARP, RRP, as well as contributions outside these frameworks (to UN agencies, NGOs or the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement) in Syria and neighboring countries, as reported to FTS and UNHCR. The “other donors” category includes previous year’s carry-over stocks (i.e. stocks physically in-country at 31 December) and carry-over contributions (i.e. funds committed by the donor at 31 December), not spent or used in the previous year, and now to be applied to projects in the current year.

Figure 6: Top 10 donor contributions to the Syria crisis, 2013



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS data

New pooled fund for Syria

In 2013, a new Emergency Response Fund (ERF) for Syria was established by the UN. Emergency Response Funds enable a wide range of donors, especially those without a strong country presence, to make contributions and for allocations to meet changing needs and to support local organisations as appropriate.

As of 4 June 2013, donors have contributed nearly US\$37.5 million to the ERF; the principal donor has so far this year been Kuwait, with US\$12.0 million. The ERF has so far allocated US\$15.5 million to projects in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.⁵

The revised requirements announced by the UN on Friday 7 June 2013 underline the gravity of the situation, both in Syria and within the region. The ongoing conflict is causing exceptional human suffering and economic destruction. Antonio Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said that the US\$5 billion figure being requested for Syria amounts to what Americans spend on ice cream in 32 days, what Australians spend on overseas travel in 10 weeks or what German drivers spend on petrol in 6 weeks. But austerity and economic crisis can hold back funding.

Donors need to understand that responding to the needs is fundamental both from a humanitarian point of view, but also because the current crisis is threatening to the entire region with dramatic implications on regional security and socio-economic development.

⁵ As of 30 May 2013