

Briefing

Humanitarian funding to the Syrian crisis: Update

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Global Humanitarian
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As the crisis in Syria looks set to enter its fourth year, the needs and vulnerabilities of those affected is increasing. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that 9.3 million people are in need of assistance, with 6.3 million people displaced within Syria and 2.3 million Syrian refugees in the region registered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

On 16 December 2013 the UN announced the largest appeal for a single crisis to date. The appeal for 2014, which combines requirements for Syria and neighbouring countries, amounts to US\$6.5 billion. The total surpasses the 2013 figure of US\$5.2 billion for the Syria crisis.

Within the overall appeal figure of US\$6.5 billion, US\$2.3 billion will be allocated to the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP), while US\$4.2 billion is for the Regional Response Plan 6 (RRP6). The RRP6 funding will assist refugees and communities hosting refugees in neighbouring countries including Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq.

Within this framework, the 2nd pledging conference for Syria is scheduled to take place on 15 January 2014 in Kuwait. One year ago, at the first pledging conference in Kuwait, US\$1.5 million was pledged for humanitarian efforts in Syria and neighbouring countries.

This briefing paper provides an update on humanitarian funding to the Syria crisis including:

- *analysis of humanitarian assistance over the three-year period*
- *an overview of the funding contributions for the two main UN appeals (RRP and SHARP) as well as the Syria Emergency Response Fund (ERF)*
- *a brief look ahead to requirements for 2014*

Analysis on the funding situation after the Kuwait conference will follow this briefing.



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Background

The conflict, which began in March 2011, continues to escalate. Official estimates of those in need in Syria increased exponentially during 2013. According to estimates by the UK-based [Syrian Observatory for Human Rights](#), by the end of the year, 130,433 casualties had been recorded at least one-third of whom were civilians.¹ But a lack of access means that reports are difficult to verify and the UN, which has often cited the figure of more than 100,000 deaths, decided to [stop reporting casualty figures](#) due to the inability to confirm the accuracy of reports.²

The OCHA figure for those affected by the humanitarian conflict has risen to [9.3 million](#), an increase of 2.5 million from the previous estimate of 6.8 million in April 2013 and more than one-third of the population of Syria (21.4 million) before the outbreak of the crisis.³ While needs increase, humanitarian access to affected populations within Syria remains a [major concern](#), particularly in the north of the country.^{4 5}

The regional impact has also been [considerable](#).⁶ Not only is fighting posing a problem for humanitarian access within the country but a major concern among the humanitarian community is the potential spread of violence across Syria's borders, particularly in [Iraq](#) and [Lebanon](#), although [Turkey](#) is also at risk from spillover violence.^{7 8 9}

There is no immediate end in sight to the conflict and needs are likely to be long-term. In late December 2013, the [UN confirmed](#) that an international conference on Syria (Geneva II) will begin on 22 January 2014 in Switzerland.¹⁰ Participants will include the two Syrian delegations, Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN and Arab League Special Envoy, as well as the US and Russian representatives but some key actors in the process such as the Syrian National Council have already confirmed they will not attend the talks. But diplomats have already cautioned that this event is unlikely to lead to an immediate solution to the crisis and is more likely to be the start of "a process" lasting several months.

Rising displacement

The deteriorating situation within the country has seen the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) rise although access and movement of IDPs makes a more accurate estimate difficult. Although the security situation within Syria does not allow for assessments, according to OCHA figures, there are now an [estimated 6.3 million](#) IDPs – the European Commission put estimates lower at [between 4.25 to 5.1 million people](#) – a considerable increase from [1.2 million](#) in October 2012.¹¹

¹ Press release, [Syrian Observatory for Human Rights](#), 1 January 2014.

² [Associated Press](#), 7 January 2014 [Accessed 10 January 2014]

³ UNOCHA, [Emergencies website](#). [Accessed 10 January 2014]

⁴ UN OCHA, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos [Statement on Syria](#), 31 December 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

⁵ ACAPS, [Syria NEEDS analysis](#). [Accessed 10 January 2014].

⁶ Economist. [Where are Syria's refugees going?](#) 2 December 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

⁷ Economist, [Violence in Iraq](#), 17 July 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

⁸ Crisis Group, [Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey](#), 30 April 2013.

⁹ UN news centre, [Syria: Ban urges political solution to prevent spillover of conflict](#). [Accessed 10 January 2014]

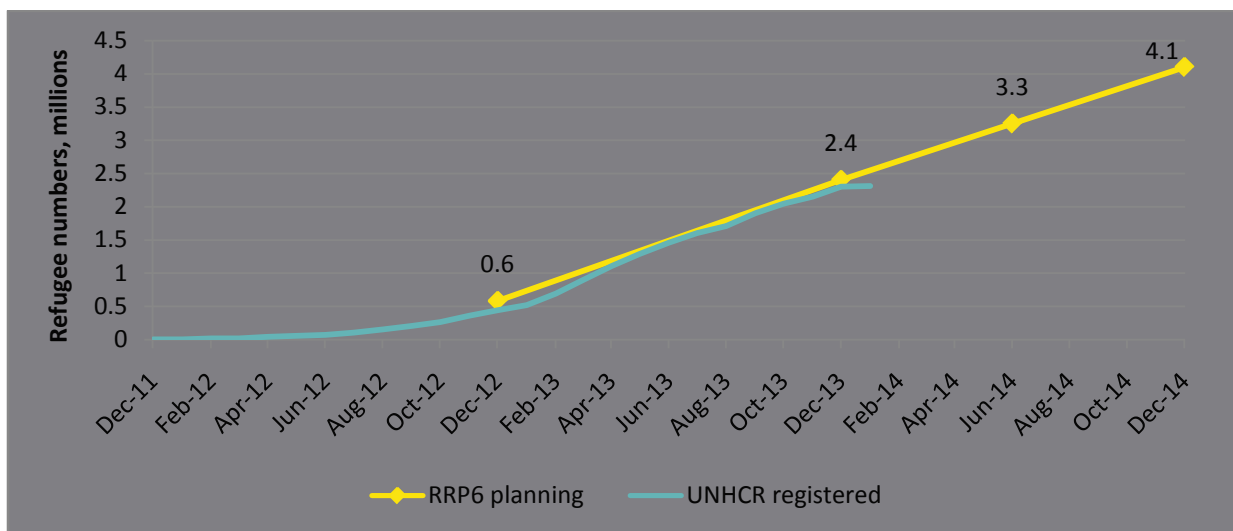
¹⁰ UNIFEED, [Brahimi](#), 20 December 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

¹¹ UNOCHA, [Emergencies](#). [Accessed 10 January 2014]

¹² ¹³ Moreover, a significant Palestinian refugee population (estimated at [540,000 by the UN Relief and Works Agency \(UNRWA\)](#) located in Syria before the conflict began has been affected. ¹⁴ Many people are still trapped in Syria, while others have been displaced further afield to neighbouring countries. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has been supporting this population to date, but fighting has also affected the ability of the UN agency to deliver humanitarian relief.

By the end of December 2013, UNHCR had registered over 2.3 million Syrian refugees who have fled fighting. ¹⁵ But the figure is likely to be even higher as a [report](#) by the UK-based Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), pointed to a frustration among international NGOs about a slow registration process. ¹⁶ With an estimated further 58,000 refugees already awaiting registration, UNHCR predicts that refugee numbers will continue to rise in 2014 and could reach more than 4 million by the end of 2014. Nevertheless, this figure represents a dramatic increase from 2013 with the number of refugees trebling in one year.

Figure 1: Syrian refugees registered by UNHCR and RRP6 planning for 2014



Source: Development Initiatives based on UNHCR data and RRP6 predictions

In the face of ongoing violence and rising casualty figures, the four main neighbouring countries hosting refugees are Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. But a significant number of refugees have also been registered in Egypt and other North African countries. According to UNHCR registration figures, among the five main host countries, Lebanon has received the largest share of refugees (842,482), followed by Jordan (567,111) and then Turkey (539,761). ¹⁷ Refugees are living in various

¹² [European Commission](#), 6 January 2014. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

¹³ UN, [Emergency Relief Coordinator's key messages on Syria](#), 25 October 2012. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

¹⁴ UNRWA, [Syria Crisis](#), 17 December 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

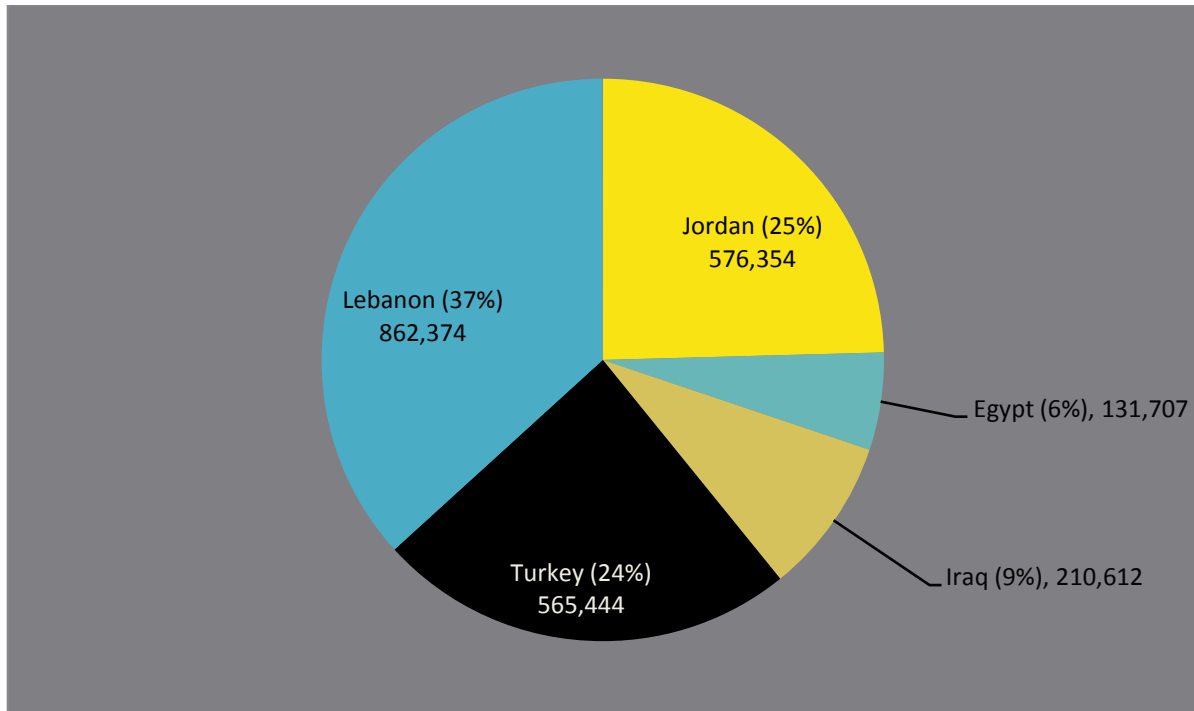
¹⁵ [UNHCR data](#) downloaded on 6 January 2014.

¹⁶ DEC Syria Crisis Appeal 2013, [Response Review Final Report](#), 18 October 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

¹⁷ [UNHCR data](#) downloaded on 6 January 2014.

situations including fixed settlements (camps), outside camp settlements, and host communities necessitating a complex response to needs.

Figure 2: Syrian refugees in the five main host countries



Source: Development Initiatives based on UNHCR data

The international community response

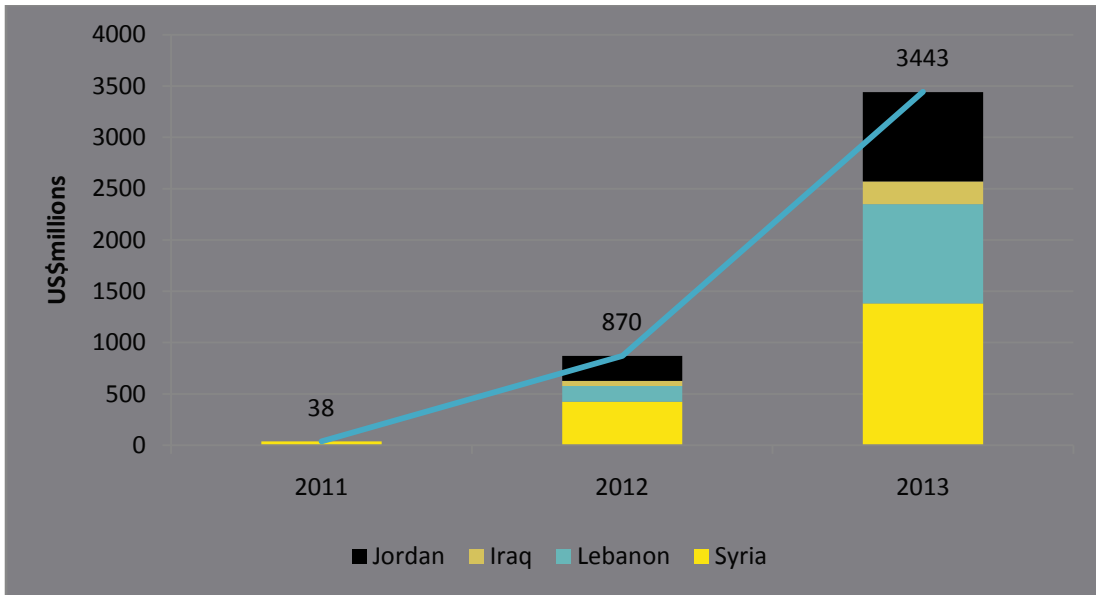
Have UN requirements been met?

The international community response to the crisis – and in particular the delay in financing the humanitarian response – has been heavily criticised.¹⁸ In 2011, the first year after fighting initially broke out in March 2011, the focus of the international community was on a political solution. The response to the Syrian crisis in 2011 amounted to US\$38 million (see figure 3 below) but as the situation deteriorated further over 2012, funding increased gradually. In January 2013, the [International Humanitarian Pledging Conference](#) in Kuwait led to pledges of more than US\$1.5 billion, which is reflected in the substantial increase in funding for the crisis in 2013.¹⁹

¹⁸ NY Times, [UN Calls lag in Syria Aid Worst Funding Crisis in Recent Memory](#), 15 March 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014].

¹⁹ UN OCHA, [First Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria](#), 30 January 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

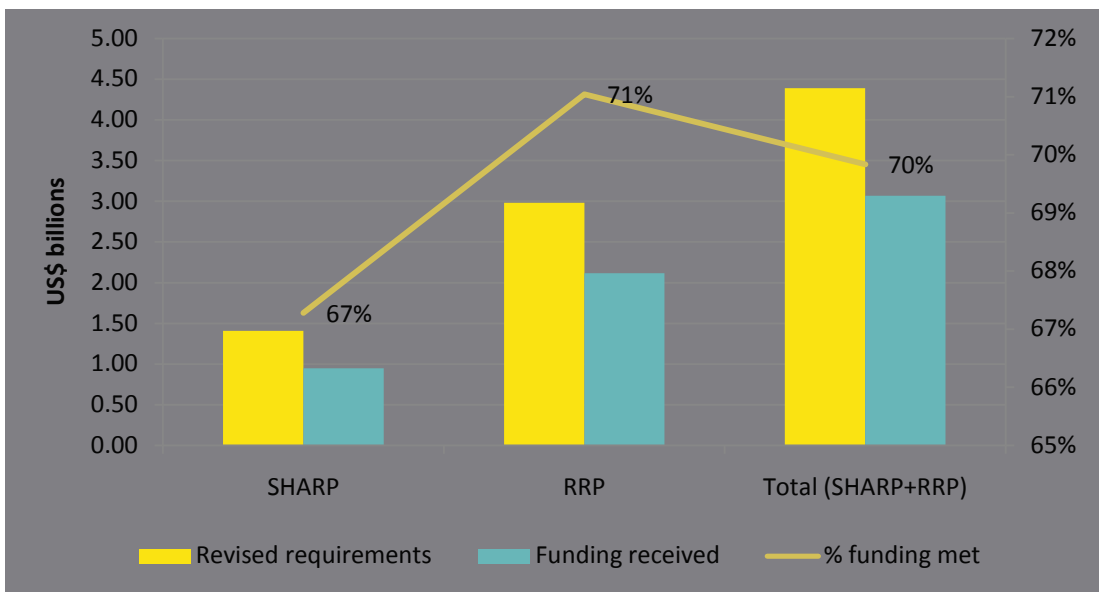
Figure 3: Overall humanitarian assistance to Syria and neighbouring countries in response to the crisis (2011–2013)



Source: Development Initiatives based on data from UN OCHA FTS.

In 2013, of the revised requirements of US\$4.4 billion requested within the appeal, US\$3.1 billion of funding was received meaning the appeal was 70% funded.²⁰ But the sheer size of the requirements within both Syria and the region means that despite being 70% funded, US\$1.3 billion of requirements were unmet. The figure of unmet requirements for the Syrian crisis is larger than all humanitarian assistance to South Sudan in 2013 (US\$906 million).

Figure 4: Funding requirements and commitments for the SHARP and the RRP in 2013



²⁰ More funding was also recorded by UN OCHA FTS outside of the appeal with an estimated total of US\$4.4 billion as of 8 January 2014.

Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS data

Donor contributions

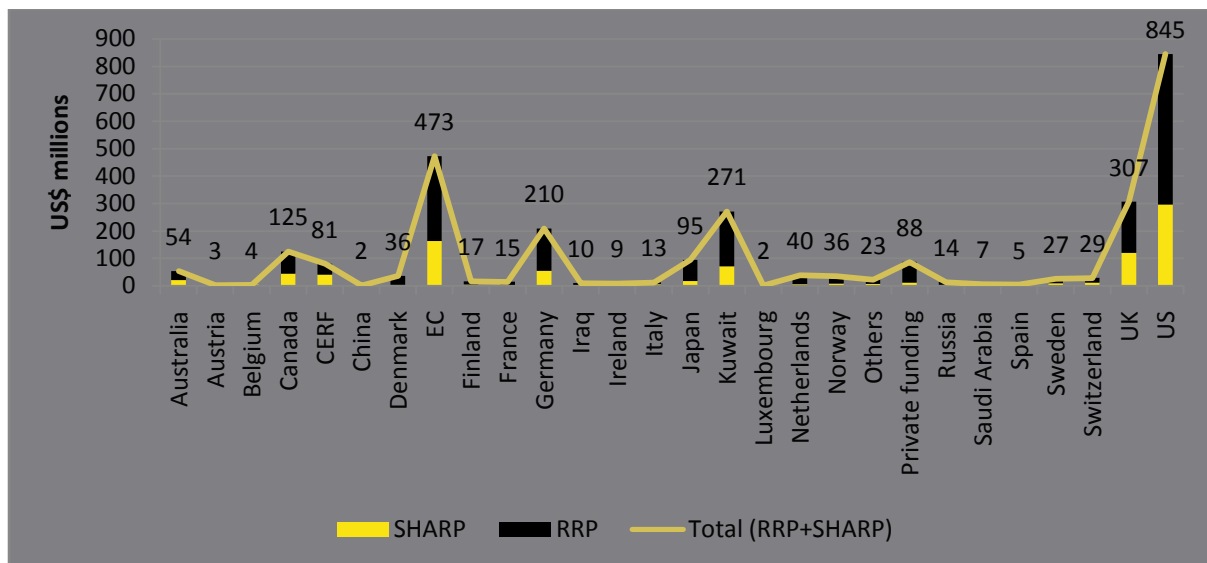
Where has funding come from in 2013?

The main donors to the Regional Response Plan (RRP) and Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) in 2013 were the United States, the UK and the European Commission. Funding for the RRP was higher than for the SHARP for most donors – including the three main – except smaller donors. Among these smaller donors countries such as China, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg only gave to the RRP, while France, Austria and Iraq only gave to the SHARP.

The top five donors to the RRP and SHARP were the US (US\$845 million), the European Commission (US\$473), the UK (US\$307), Kuwait (US\$271) and Germany (US\$210 million). Kuwait, Sweden and the UK also scored highly on the [fair share analysis](#) carried out by Oxfam in September 2013. Oxfam used the data from UN OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS), the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), combining these with gross national income (GNI) and overall wealth to [calculate](#) further analysis of the donor data.

The SHARP and RRP are complementary to government-led humanitarian response by refugee-hosting governments and other appeal frameworks such as those issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).²¹ Although details of the ICRC appeal funding in 2013 are not available, the budget for 2014 for the response to the Syrian crisis (the ICRC is working in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq) is considerable at US\$116 million.

Figure 5: Donor contributions to the RRP and the SHARP in 2013



Source: UN OCHA FTS

²¹ UN OCHA, [Syria Crisis Humanitarian Response 2014](#), 19 December 2014. [Accessed 9 January 2014]

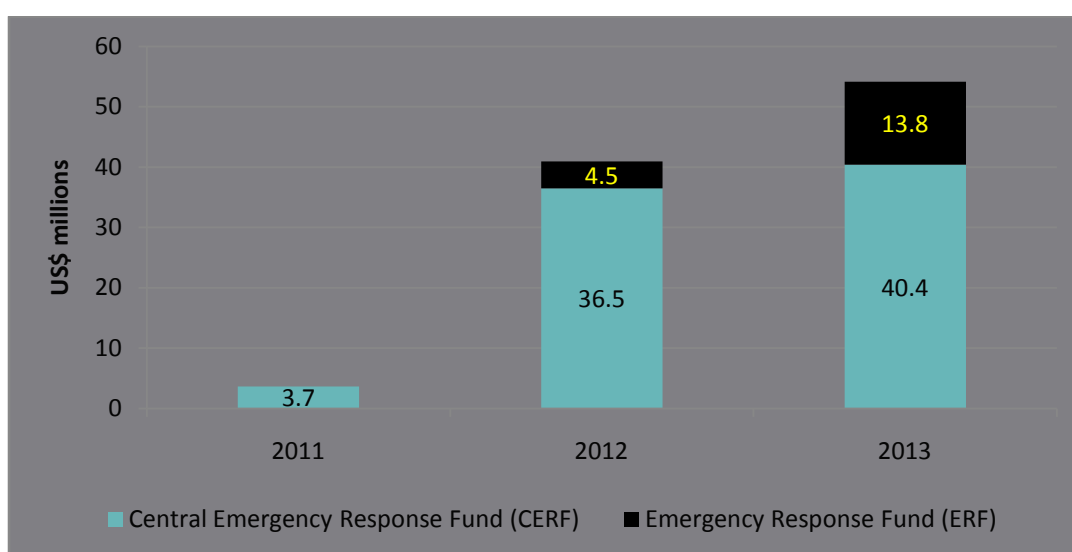
Note: Private funding includes funding from organisations and individuals to the RRP and SHARP appeals.

Pooled funding

Many donors contribute to the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis via pooled funds, in addition to or instead of, direct contributions to the appeal. The different types of pooled funding used in the Syrian crisis reflect the evolving situation on the ground, financing requirements and needs. The [Emergency Response Funds \(ERFs\)](#) are relatively smaller disbursements (less than US\$250,000 per project) targeted at NGOs and, to a lesser extent, UN agencies. As they are more flexible, ERFs provide funding which can bridge gaps or be used for emergency funding in crisis situations. Decisions are taken in-country by the Humanitarian Country Team. Globally in 2013, there were 13 ERFs and the overall response to the Syrian crisis was one of the largest with US\$33 million allocated in 2013.

Meanwhile, the [Central Emergency Response Fund \(CERF\)](#) is larger. In 2013, for example, this global fund allocated US\$482 million to respond to crises in 45 countries. The CERF has two windows, the rapid response window and the underfunded emergency window. All allocations made in response to the Syrian crisis in 2012 and 2013 were made through the CERF [rapid response window](#), which according to OCHA is “to promote early action and response to reduce loss of life, and to enhance response to time-critical requirements.”

Figure 6: Pooled funding from the CERF and ERF to Syria in 2013



Source: UN OCHA FTS

Note Data was downloaded on 7 January 2014 and is likely to change.

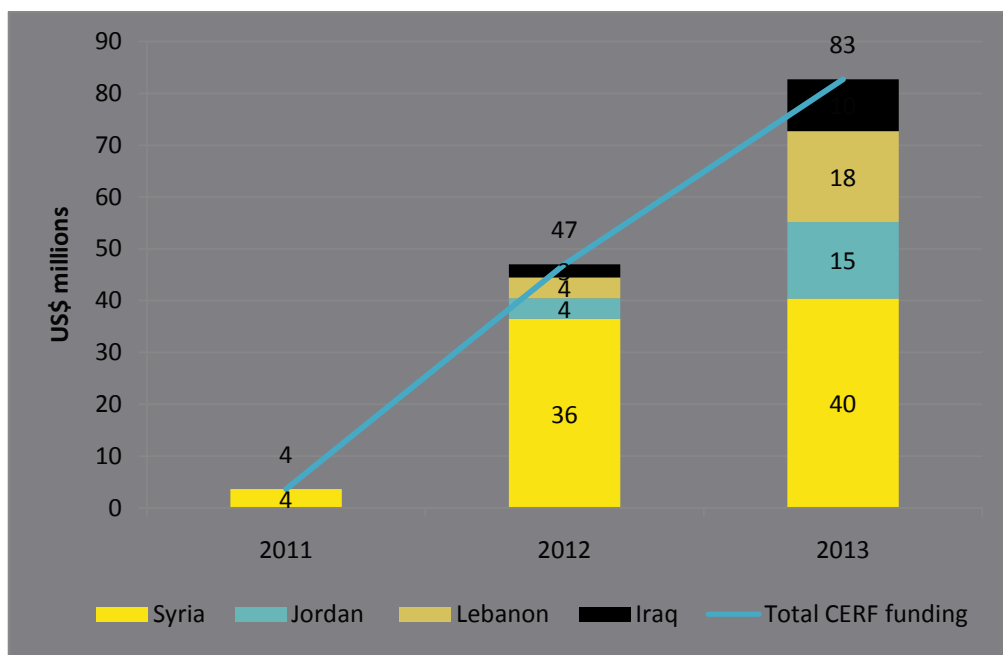
Central Emergency Response Fund funding to the Syrian crisis

In the period immediately after the initial outbreak of the crisis in 2011, the CERF disbursed just over US\$3.7 million through the CERF rapid response window.²² This funding largely went to agencies

²² Details of the decisions made on allocation of CERF funding can be found on the [OCHA website](#).

providing humanitarian relief within Syria. In 2012, as fighting intensified and refugee numbers in neighbouring countries increased, CERF funding was disbursed not only in Syria (US\$29.5 million through the rapid response window and US\$7 million through the underfunded emergencies window), but also to Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan as Syrian (and Palestinian) refugees flowed into these countries. In 2013, Syria alone was the second largest recipient of CERF funding, after Sudan (US\$47 million), receiving a total of US\$40 million. When combined with contributions to Lebanon (US\$19 million), Jordan (US\$15 million) and Iraq (US\$10 million), overall response to the Syrian crisis from the CERF increases to more than US\$80 million out of a total US\$482 million (16% of total CERF allocations).

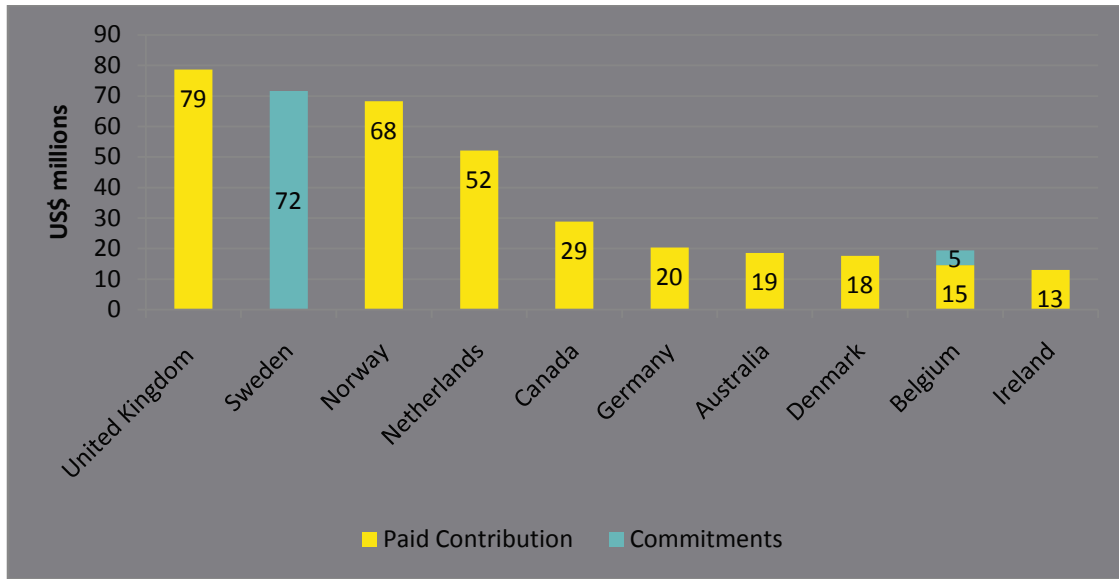
Figure 7: Allocations through the CERF to countries affected by the Syrian crisis (2011–2013)



Source: UN OCHA FTS

A number of donors who give directly to the SHARP and RRP also give to CERF pooled funding, which as figure 7 shows is a significant contributor to overall humanitarian assistance for the Syrian crisis. The main donors to the CERF are the UK, Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands, all of which committed more than US\$50 million.

Figure 8: Major donors to the CERF in 2013



Source: UN OCHA FTS

The Syria Emergency Response Fund

In 2013, the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) for the Syrian crisis was one of 13 ERFs established by the UN. It was the second official ERF for Syria and funded projects in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan. The aim of the ERF was to facilitate a wide range of donors, especially those without a strong country presence, to make contributions. Out of the US\$103 million global total given to ERFs during 2013, US\$33 million – almost one-third – was allocated in response to the Syrian crisis.

The fact that the ERF is largely for smaller donors without a significant operational presence in the affected countries is reflected in the donors. Of the overall US\$38 million received during 2013 (US\$19 million was carried over from the previous year), the largest share was given by Kuwait, with paid contributions totalling US\$12 million and Germany (US\$10 million). But Sweden (US\$7 million), Belgium (US\$6 million) and Ireland (US\$2million) also contributed significantly to the fund.

Figure 9: Top 5 donor contributions to the ERF in 2013

	Donor	US\$ millions
1	Kuwait	12.0
2	Germany	10.1
3	Sweden	6.8
4	Belgium	5.9
5	Ireland	2.4

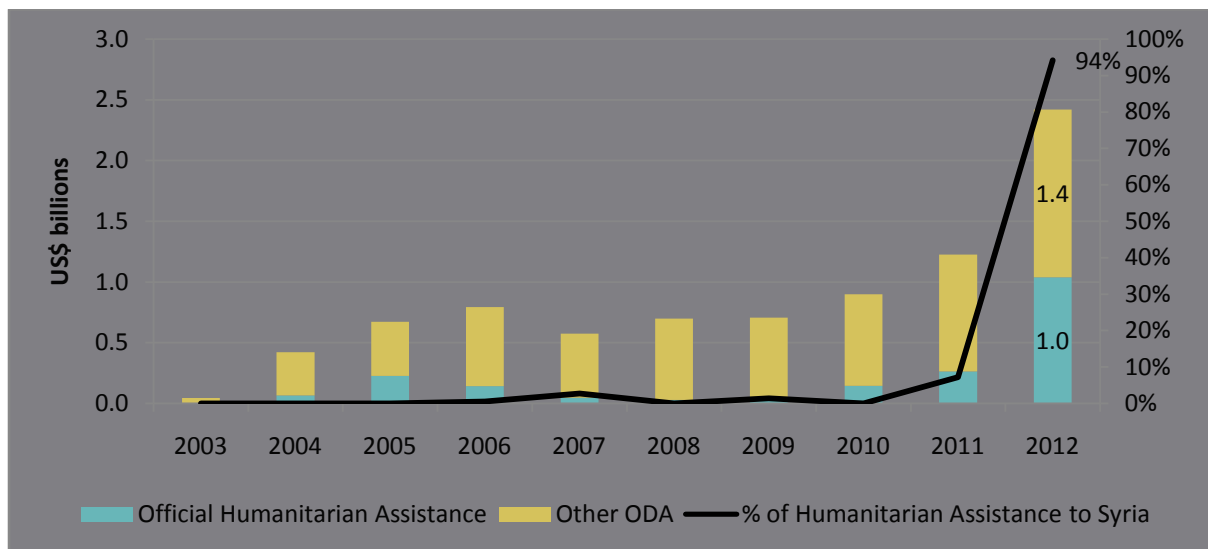
Source: UN OCHA FTS

Turkey's role in the response to the Syrian crisis

The [Global Assistance Report 2013](#) also highlights the support that countries in the region have been providing to Syrian refugees and draws on the example of Turkey. Humanitarian assistance given by Turkey rose considerably in 2012 to US\$1 billion (almost 40% of Turkey's official development assistance (ODA)) making it the 4th largest donor of official humanitarian assistance that year. The majority of Turkey's ODA goes to countries within its region, and of this 94% of the 1.0 billion given as humanitarian assistance in 2012 was allocated to Syria (see figure 11). Figures are not yet available for 2013 from the OECD DAC.

While Turkey is not a donor to the RRP and SHARP appeals (see above for donors to the RRP and SHARP appeals), the country shares a considerable financial burden from the Syrian crisis. A large proportion of Turkey's humanitarian assistance is likely to be accounted for through the hosting of an estimated refugee population which, according to UNHCR, totals just over half a million.²³ The [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\) Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\) definition of ODA](#) allows countries to include the costs of hosting refugees for the first year of their stay.²⁴ As the GHA report also acknowledges, Turkey's humanitarian assistance is captured by the OECD DAC database as Turkey is one of the countries outside of the OECD DAC members that reports ODA. Other refugee-hosting countries in the region, including Lebanon and Jordan, do not report to the DAC, so their comparable expenditure is not captured.

Figure 10: Turkey's official humanitarian assistance and ODA (2003–2012) and percentage of humanitarian assistance from Turkey allocated to Syria



Source: OECD DAC (Table 2a). Note ODA is that which is recorded for all donors and not just the current DAC members (the DAC consists of 28 members as of 1 January 2014). For example, Turkey is not a DAC donor but does record its ODA to the OECD DAC, unlike Jordan and Lebanon.²⁵ ODA data is not available for 2013.

²³ UNHCR data (see footnote 15).

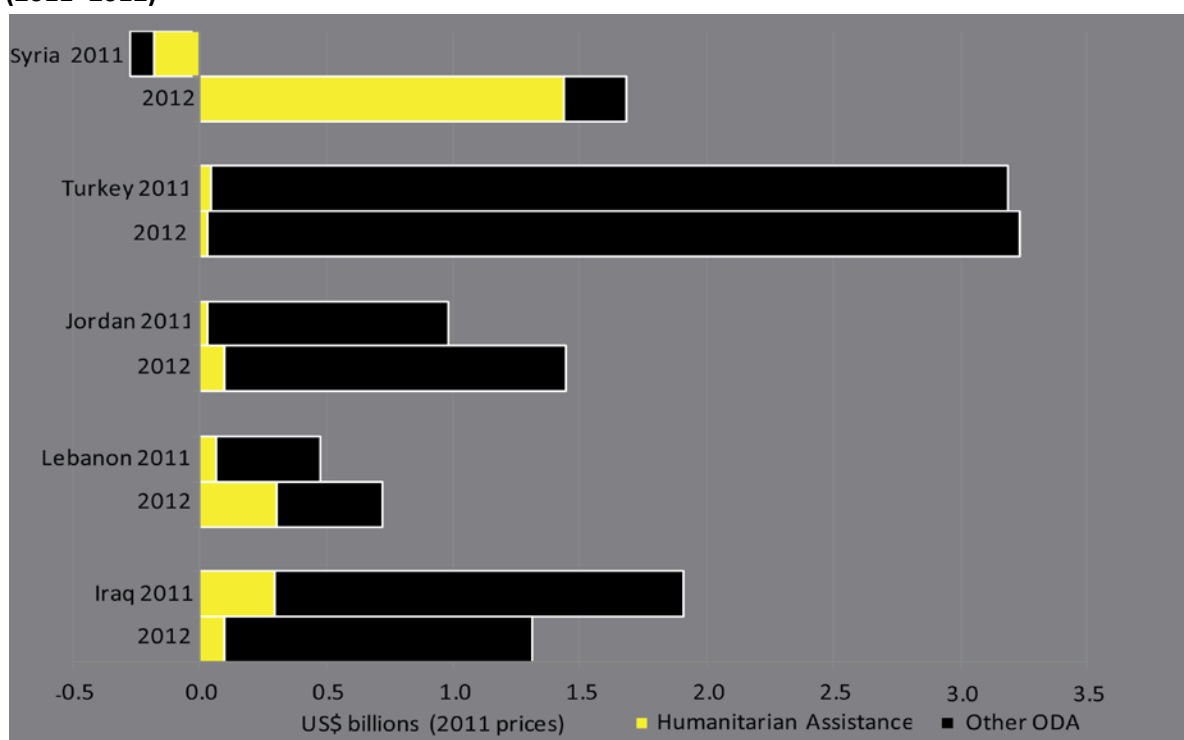
²⁴ OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), [ODA Factsheet](#), November 2008. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

²⁵ For a comprehensive list of the 17 countries reporting to the OECD DAC see [the OECD website](#) [Accessed 10 January 2014]

ODA to the countries affected by the Syrian crisis

Turkey, as well as other countries severely affected by the Syrian crisis, is a recipient of official ODA. In 2012, Turkey received US\$3.8 billion, according to data from the OECD DAC updated in December 2013 (see figure 12). An overall increase in ODA to the region between 2011 and 2012 can be noted as the Syrian crisis has deteriorated. ODA to Syria (the majority of which is official humanitarian assistance) increased by 101%, while ODA to Jordan (38%), Lebanon (51%) and Turkey (3.6%) also rose, although ODA decreased to Iraq (-31%).

Figure 11: Humanitarian and other ODA flows into the five countries hosting most Syrian refugees (2011–2012)



Source: OECD DAC (Table 2a). Note ODA is that which is recorded for all donors and not just the current DAC members (the DAC consists of 28 members as of 1 January 2014). For example, Turkey is not a DAC donor but does record its ODA to the OECD DAC. Syria’s net ODA was negative in 2011 largely due to substantially negative ODA grants from the US.

Private giving

Private giving from individuals and organisations to the UN Syria crisis appeal in 2013 totalled US\$88 million. This figure, recorded by UN OCHA’s FTS (see figure 5), also includes money received from national appeals such as the British [Disasters Emergency Committee](#) (DEC). Although 70% of the UN RRP and SHARP appeal requirements were met in 2013, there was a comparatively low level of funding generated through national appeals for the Syrian crisis. This was highlighted by the Canadian-based NGO platform, the [Humanitarian Coalition](#).²⁶ Their report included data from national platforms such as the British DEC and the Italian Agency for Emergency Response, all of

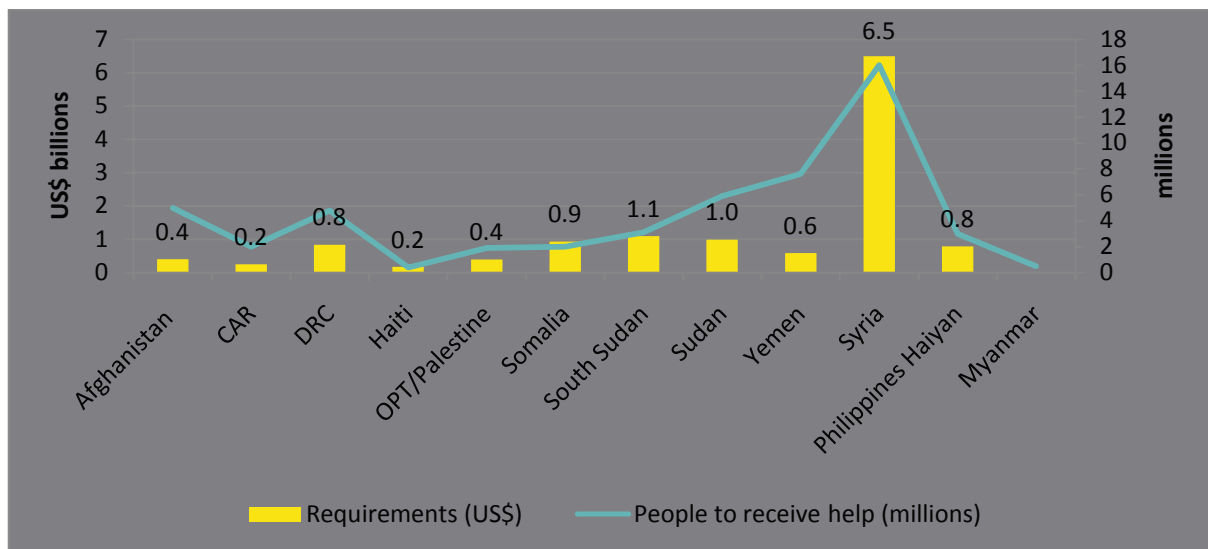
²⁶ Syria and the Giving Gap, [Why we give more after natural disasters](#), 6 November 2013. [Accessed 10 January 2014]

which claimed to have experienced significantly lower national funding support for the response to the Syrian crisis. More on private funding can be found in the GHA report: [Private Funding for Humanitarian Assistance](#).

Future funding

In December 2013, the UN launched the 2014 appeals requesting US\$12.9 billion for 17 countries. (For more information on the 2014 overall appeal, please see the [GHA briefing from December 2013](#).²⁷) The Syrian crisis represents the largest share of the 2014 appeal with an overall appeal figure of US\$6.5 billion.

Figure 11: UN funding requirements 2014



Source: Development Initiatives based on data from UN OCHA FTS

This amount is the largest amount ever requested for a single crisis, eclipsing the amount requested for 2013 (US\$5.2 billion) and highlighting the deteriorating situation in Syria and the region.

As a reflection of both access and the situation in the region, of the US\$6.5 billion appeal, US\$2.3 billion – one third of total requirements – is earmarked for the SHARP to assist those affected by the crisis within Syria. The remaining US\$4.2 billion – around two-thirds – is for the RRP6, funding which will go towards supporting Syrian refugees and host communities in countries hosting refugees outside of Syria.

Donors will meet on 15 January 2014 in Kuwait to make their pledges against this appeal and we will continue to provide updates as these pledges and allocations materialise.

Further information:

[UN OCHA FTS tracking page](#) | [UN OCHA pledging conference page](#) | [UN OCHA Syria page](#) | [UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response information portal](#) | [Syria Needs Analysis Project \(SNAP\)](#)

²⁷ Global Humanitarian Assistance, [The 2014 Appeal – Different process, greater needs](#), December 2013.