

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Ceasefires enable delivery of humanitarian assistance and return of civilians.
- . Fourth round of polio 'national immunisation days' campaign reaches almost 2.8 million children
- More than 3.65 million people receive food assistance

### FIGURES

Population	21.4 m
# of PIN	9.3 m
# of IDPs	6.5 m
# of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries and North Africa	2.5 m

### FUNDING

**\$ 2.3 billion**

requested (US\$) for humanitarian assistance inside Syria

**9% funded**

**\$ 4.2 billion**

requested (US\$) for the Regional Refugee Response Plan

**14% funded**



SARC Rural Damascus

### In this issue

- NE governorates hard to reach* P.1
- Health risks increase* P.2
- Limited access gains* P.3
- Civilians lack basic supplies* P.3
- Material assistance helps protect* P.4
- Overview of coordinated response* P.5
- Funding overview* P.8

## Northeast governorates remain extremely challenging to access

### Humanitarian actors find ways to provide assistance to vulnerable in Al-Hasakeh

Chartered flights from Iraq are progressing with a plan to deliver 32,400 family food rations by mid-March. By 11 March 16,170 family food rations (including 14,761 bags of wheat flour and 14,940 bags of rice) were airlifted. On 14 March, the Logistics Cluster delivered the first in a series of emergency airlifts from Damascus to Quamishli, organized to transport a total of over 400 m<sup>3</sup> of WASH, shelter, food, protection, and health items. All agencies involved have been pre-positioning their cargo in one of the Cluster's common warehousing facilities in preparation for the airlifts.

Known as the 'bread basket' of Syria before the crisis, food production in Al-Hasakeh has declined significantly, contributing to food shortages and increasing vulnerability of food producers. The Food and Agriculture Sector has provided 12,100 vulnerable farmers with locally procured seeds in time for the winter planting season. The farmers should use these inputs to produce a harvest sufficient to cover the basic food needs for their families for 12 months, as well as some additional products to sell at the market for income.

Water trucking activities began in three villages in south Al-Hasakeh and four villages in the north, bringing 3 cubic meters of drinking water each to 1,305 families (approximately 6,525 people) for the coming month.

### Some assistance reaches Ar Raqqa and Deir Ez Zor

The entire governorate of Ar Raqqa remains hard to access, with intermittent assistance due to insecurity. On 1 March, some progress was made when UNHCR dispatched assistance to local charities to help 5,000 people. This was the first dispatch to the area since November 2013. On 8 March, WFP trucks again reached Ar Raqqa Governorate with supplies for 20,000 people in need, as well as a WHO shipment of medicines. And on 11 March, 3,200 rations reached the warehouse of a WFP partner in Ar Raqqa.

Insecurity along the road, and reluctance from some Government check-points as well as armed opposition groups have continued to challenge access to Deir Ez Zor Governorate. Some progress was made, however, on 27 February, when SARC, supported by WFP, sent a convoy to provide assistance to 13,400 families to Deir Ez Zor City and the rural areas of Abu Kamal city, Al Mayadeen city, Muhassan sub-district and Kabayeb. Since 1 March, additional deliveries of supplies to Deir Ez Zor Governorate are on hold as several trucks reportedly remain stuck at a checkpoint, including those carrying food rations for approximately 45,000 people. A WHO shipment of medicines reached Deir Ez Zor on 10 March.

## Two-thirds of public hospitals are providing some services while health risks increase

### Improved reporting indicates 65 per cent of Ministry of Health public hospitals continue to offer some services

The HeRAMS (Health Resources & services Availability Mapping System) report for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2013 indicated that 65 per cent of Ministry of Health public hospitals (59 out of 91) are reported as open and providing some services (ie. “functioning”). Twelve hospitals (13%) are reported as not functioning, while 20 hospitals (22%) were not able to report due to security and accessibility challenges.

Four out of 12 hospitals in Homs governorate are reported as functioning, although none of them are in Homs city. More than half of the reported functioning hospitals (31) are operating without emergency physicians. In Dar’a, six out of nine functioning hospitals are operating without emergency physicians, while two of them reported no specialists. The report also shows that availability of specialized healthcare services is limited in public hospitals. For example, management of severe acute malnutrition is only available in 30 per cent of the public hospitals.

The increase in number of ‘functioning’ hospitals from the third quarter of 2013 report (45) is attributed to an overall improvement in reporting, for example in Idlib, Homs and Latakia. A total of 78% (71 out of 91) MoH public hospitals from 12 governorates reported to the HeRAMS, compared to 70% (a total 64 out of 91 public hospitals) from 11 governorates, in the previous quarter. Most of the 20 non-reporting hospitals were from Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor and Homs. The HeRAMS platform is a standardized approach for humanitarian emergencies and has been established to provide systematic approach for periodic data collection and information dissemination.

### Marked increase in reports of measles, and other infectious diseases

The Early Warning And Response System (EWARS) reported a marked increase in the number of measles cases across various governorates, but concentrated in Deir-ez-Zor where 118 out of 206 cases have been reported. Measles, also known as Rubella, is one of the most contagious infectious diseases with an extremely high rate of secondary infection. Health Sector partners promptly supported the Ministry of Health to collect blood samples from some cases for dispatch to the reference lab in Damascus and Vitamin A was provided to suspected cases for treatment.

Seven new cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis were reported: 1 in Ar-Raqqa; 2 in As-Sweida; 2 in Damascus; and 2 in Hama. Confirmed cases of polio remain at 25, however.

434 cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI) were reported, with the majority still concentrated in Damascus (171) and Hama (193).

## Ad hoc access enables delivery of some humanitarian aid

### Joint inter-agency convoy reaches Al Houla area of Homs for the first time in nine months

On 7 March, a joint humanitarian convoy delivered food, NFIs, hygiene and some medicine supplies for up to 20,000 people in Al Houla area of Homs. This area has an estimated population of at least 70,000 - some 45,000 of them are assessed as being in need of humanitarian assistance. Until this month, Al Houla had not been reached with humanitarian assistance from within Syria since May 2013.

UN staff from Homs report that food is available in limited quantities, although prices are 25-30 per cent higher than normal. Basic household items are also available but at four to five times the normal cost. While water can be pumped daily via wells during the several hours of available electricity, lack of purification supplies leaves water unclean for

drinking. Between 80 to 90 per cent of the schools in Al-Houla are reportedly damaged, and lack education supplies. This has caused in an estimated 11,340 students to attend

classes in private homes provided in three shifts each day. It is reported that students have not taken exams since 2012 as parents fear sending their children to Homs City due to insecurity.

### **More than 15,000 boys and girls receive remedial education activities in Ar-Rastan**

The Education Sector and local NGO partner in Ar-Rastan launched remedial education activities in 49 learning centres in various villages, reaching a total of 15,490 boys and girls. In addition, over 12,850 children benefited from education supply distribution, such as school bags and stationery.



Credit: SARC Homs/  
Ar-Rastan (Feb 2014) – Primary school aged children participate in a remedial education session in Ar-Rastan, Homs.

### **Despite insecurity, an inter-agency convoy delivers aid to IDPs in Idlib**

From 1- 3 March, an inter-agency convoy of 24 trucks transported food, NFIs, hygiene and health items to SARC Idlib's warehouse near Salqin. These items are in the process of being distributed to 3,500 families (approximately 17,500 people) in eight IDP camps in Harim district. Some camps have not been reached by the coordinated response since the beginning of the crisis and were agreed priorities for the inter-agency convoy modality during a mission to Idlib City in January.

The fragile security situation in Idlib presents a significant challenge to humanitarian actors, preventing access to many locations for months at a time. While the Food Sector continues to dispatch increasing amounts of assistance to the governorate in response to the consistent influx of IDPs to the area, an estimated 160,000 people living in areas where access has been interrupted for several months, up to two years in some cases, remain inaccessible. Since the beginning of 2014, 3,850 farmers in Idlib have been reached through the distribution of wheat and barley seeds.

## **Ceasefire negotiations ongoing while civilians remain trapped without basic supplies**

### **Food supplies likely to have run out given lack of access to Yarmouk Camp since February**

Distributions of food and limited other supplies to civilians in Yarmouk Camp have been suspended since 28 February following a major deterioration in the security situation. With a notable increase in shelling and fighting, the prospect of an early resumption of food parcel distribution is worrying. While 7,708 food parcels, sufficient for one family for up to ten days, have been distributed to residents of Yarmouk Camp since access was first regained on 18 January, it is estimated that the food supplies from the 1,180 delivered in February have now run out.

## **Provision of material assistance through a protection lens**

Recent protection monitoring points to increasingly extreme vulnerability within Syria. Targeted protection assistance is being delivered by partners to help alleviate some of the specific needs of the most vulnerable. For example, provision of hygiene kits (which include undergarments and toiletries) to people living in crowded environments lacking privacy and appropriate spaces for women and children helps people maintain some semblance of personal dignity. Hygiene kits have been provided to 10,000 women and

1,300 men in Aleppo and Rural Damascus. During the winter, clothes were distributed to 196,591 individuals. A total of 223 wheelchairs have been distributed to disabled people in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Tartous. As was witnessed in Homs many disabled displaced who suddenly flee their homes had to be carried by their family members leaving them no chance to take their belongings. It is hoped that these wheelchairs will be able to improve the quality of life of these individuals. In Homs, 103 recreational kits were distributed 10,300 children and 76 MRE kits, through the Ministry of Education, to benefit 22,800 children. Each kit is used by one teacher to benefit 300 children.

## Overview of the coordinated humanitarian response

### **Fourth round of polio ‘national immunisation days’ campaign reaches almost 2.8 million children**

During the 4<sup>th</sup> round phase of the polio outbreak response, recent reports indicate that the campaign has reached almost 2.8 million children in government-and opposition-controlled areas – an increase from the 2.74 million children reached during the round in February. On 9 March, an independent assessment of the March campaign launched, with the aim to facilitate improved coverage in the next rounds.

A workshop brought together 40 doctors and health workers from all governorates, representing health authorities and implementing partners, to review the result of the third polio national immunisation days, towards expanding coverage rates and improving results of upcoming immunisation rounds.

### **Health services and medicines reached almost 500,000 people in Syria**

An estimated 453,725 people were directly supported by the Health Sector through provision of medicines, medical supplies or health services. Health authorities in Damascus were provided with dialysis sessions and non-communicable disease medicines for 198,516 direct beneficiaries, in addition to two anesthesia machines. Al-Moujtahed, Az-Zahrawi and Children hospitals in Damascus with life-saving medicines for 2,804 direct beneficiaries, in addition to one anesthesia machine. In Lattakia, health authorities were provided with dialysis sessions and non-communicable disease medicines for 45,518 direct beneficiaries. Two shipments, containing 128 boxes of medicines for the most common diseases, were dispatched to secondary health care facilities in Aleppo, including the University dormitory medical point, Al Akramia polyclinic, and Al Taaouf outpatient clinic, which provide services to an average of 1,350 patients per week. Another batch of medicines reached Homs, including for chronic illnesses (hypertension, coronary diseases, asthma) and for acute diseases (upper respiratory infections, flu, digestive problems). Mobile teams and fixed health centres continue to provide primary health and referral services for complicated cases in vulnerable and displaced communities, reaching 21,647 children in all governorates except Ar-Raqqa.

During 2014 in Damascus, two medical points and one first aid response centre provided 3,204 curative consultations and 444 first aid services. Vulnerable Iraqi refugees were provided with 371 consultations and services in 8 private clinics covering Internal Medicine, Gynecology, Orthopedics, Dermatology, Ophthalmology and Pediatrics. 2,158 consultations, including internal medicine and gynecology specialization, were provided through a medical point Dar’a, an area with a severe gap in provision of health services.

In response to the seasonal upsurge in influenza viruses (H1N1), 135 health professionals from Aleppo, As-Sweida, Damascus, Dar’a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Quneitra, Rural Damascus and Tartous, were trained on management, definition and complications of A (H1N1) cases. 31 per cent of the cases were reported in Hama Governorate and of the 135 professionals trained, 42 were from this area.

Thirty nurses working in primary health facilities in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Lattakia and Tartous participated in training on management of

diabetes complications and reporting.

### **More than 3.65 million people receive food assistance from January dispatches.**

Through the February dispatch cycle, almost 743,000 family food rations, sufficient to assist over 3.7 million people for a month (87 per cent of the planned 4.25 million target) were dispatched to 13 governorates in Syria. For the fourth consecutive month, February food assistance did not reach Ar-Raqqa, while only 9 per cent of the planned dispatches for February reached Deir-ez-Zor.

Over 5,000 bags of fortified wheat flour were dispatched to assist over 1 million people across Syria, achieving almost 70 per cent of the original plan targeting 1.5 million beneficiaries. Based on partner reports and rapid assessments, wheat flour distributions currently target only 11 of the 14 governorates, as Damascus, Tartous and Lattakia are estimated to have a good supply of wheat flour.

In Aleppo, Homs and Idleb and Homs, cooperating partners are channeling wheat flour to bakeries, which then produce bread for distribution to beneficiaries. In Idleb, over 72,000 people have received bread produced from the wheat flour distributions on a daily basis. In western Aleppo City, additional arrangements with bakeries enabled Food Sector partners' to increase bread distributions. A total of six public bakeries (from a previous four) are now being supplied with fortified wheat flour allowing bread production to increase from 46,000 bundles to over 65,000 per day, enough for approximately 60,000 people in the city.

In 2014, 21,888 vulnerable farmers across Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Hama and Idleb governorates received wheat and barley seeds in time for winter season planting. This represents 66 per cent of planned beneficiaries.

In order to meet the urgent needs of newly displaced families who do not have access to cooking facilities, locally procured ready-to-eat rations have been distributed to over 59,750 newly displaced people in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Quneitra, Rural Damascus and Tartous.

### **Two-pronged approach to shelter rehabilitation: Collective Shelter and Private Shelter Upgrade**

As Syria enters the fourth year of conflict, an estimated 1.2 million houses have been damaged and 400,000 completely destroyed, leaving millions of people to search for shelter. Throughout 2014, the Shelter Sector has taken forward a strategy to improve the living conditions for IDPs in official collective shelters through shelter rehabilitation works including installation of pre-fabricated water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) units, as well as roof, wall, and window insulations, winterization and other safety measures. So far in 2014, 26 shelters have been completely rehabilitated, benefitting 10,834 people – two in Damascus; three in Hama; one in Lattakia; eight in Quneitra; eight in Rural Damascus, where one of the largest shelters hosts 2,600 IDPs; and six in Tartous. In Al-Hasakeh, an assessment of ten shelter sites was finalized to underpin rehabilitation works targeting almost 1,200 people.

In order to assist the majority of IDPs who are not living in an official collective shelter, and as such are likely among the most vulnerable, the Shelter Sector is also rehabilitating private living spaces. In 2014, 17,730 IDPs have been assisted with the 'private shelter upgrade' for 924 private shelters – 708 in Aleppo; 36 in Dar'a; 137 in Damascus and Rural Damascus; and 43 in Homs.

Fluctuations of the exchange rate, lack of availability of some raw construction materials in the local market and limited access to some areas of intervention due to security present challenges to implementation of the two-pronged strategy.

### **Provision of purification supplies and generators, as well as water trucking, ensures access to clean water for more than one million Syrians**

Twenty tons of water purification supplies and one water pump were provided to the water authority in Tartous, enabling provision of clean water for one million people, including both IDPs and host communities. In Danha village in rural Homs, one 100-KVA generator set was provided to enable the community to pump drinking water for 10,000 people.

## More than one million IDPs reached with NFIs in 2014

In 2014, the NFI sector has provided non-food relief items to more than one million internally displaced people in Syria across 13 governorates, except Deir-ez-Zor. These items include: blankets, mattresses, plastic sheets, plastic rolls, winter clothes, diapers, sheets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, jerry cans, sanitary napkins and sleeping mats.

In western Aleppo City, the most urgent concern is accommodation, as people are sleeping in public gardens and open areas. Shelter upgrade work is on-going in 98 apartments, with 912 apartments rehabilitated so far (part of the "1070" project) and outreach volunteers, where possible, identified some families residing in these open spaces for referral to the appropriate associations for accommodation. Outreach volunteers also directly distributed NFI relief items, including blankets, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets and other items to 39 families living in the open (approximately 195 people). Another estimated 53,615 IDPs in western Aleppo City were reached with NFIs through local NGO partners. In addition 500 blankets, 100 mattresses, and 10 wheelchairs were also delivered to the University Hospital of Aleppo.

## Hygiene and sanitation supplies and promotion activities help prevent spread of disease

In Homs governorate, where residents frequently experience power outages for several hours per day, the WASH Sector provided one 1000-KVA Generator, enabling sewage operations to continue for over 250,000 people. In the Al Wa'er neighbourhood of Homs City, which remains extremely difficult to access, 545 IDP families (approximately, 2,725 people) received hygiene items and hygiene education sessions. A further 346 IDP families (approximately 1,750 people) in several villages were provided with hygiene awareness activities.

In Lattakia, in order to improve sanitation conditions and reduce cases of diarrhea in IDP shelters, an additional 11 prefabricated toilets were installed allowing access to improved sanitation for 440 people in the Sport City IDP complex. Plans are under-way to install more mobile toilets.

In Tartous, hygiene promotion activities covering 1,500 IDP families (approx. 7500 persons) continued in partnership with SARC branch in all the 21 collective shelters. Families were taken through awareness sessions on basic key practices for a hygienic lifestyle in order to mitigate the risk of any disease outbreaks. Roles and responsibilities were also assigned to families residing in the shelters in order to ensure that toilets installed are used properly and kept clean. This campaign included child friendly activities and incentives. Hygiene and sanitation items, such as soap and washing powder, were distributed to 476 families in six IDP shelters in Tartous Governorate. IDPs living in eight camps in Salqin area in Idleb Governorate (3750 families, or 22,236 persons) were given hygiene items to help them adopt proper hygiene practices. These families have reported that this was their first time to receive such support as the area is difficult to reach.

## Palestine refugees are provided with comprehensive humanitarian assistance

Continued provision of multi-sectoral assistance provides support for Palestine refugees as displacement is now entrenched – half of all Palestine refugees have now been displaced, many of them multiple times.

At the beginning of March, the first round of 2014 cash and food assistance in 2014 was distributed targeting 440,000 conflict-affected Palestine refugees in Aleppo, Damascus, Dar'a, Hama, Homs, Lattakia and Rural Damascus.

Additionally, and despite considerable challenges, social and microfinance services, youth development and community support trainings, life skills, extra-curricular activities, and a wide range of short-term vocational education courses and business development activities continue to be provided for Palestine refugees.

## **Capacity building will improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian community to save lives, improve welfare, and protect the rights of people in Syria**

During the last weeks, the Protection Sector has aimed to support capacity-building for those who are on the frontlines of a range of protection concerns, including lawyers, community leaders, community workers, caregivers, and teachers. Building the capacity of local actors on the ground remains one of the most effective ways to improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of response. Thirty-one participants from four local NGOs working on counter-trafficking measures were provided with information on the identification of victims of trafficking, bringing the total number of professionals and community workers trained in counter-trafficking measures and specialized services for victims of trafficking in 2014 to 327. Thirty-eight Parliamentarians, primarily from the Children and Women Rights Protection Committee, attended a session reflecting on key articles in the Children's Rights Draft Law, developed in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the Government of Syria in 1993). The first phase of mine risk education training was conducted in Damascus, targeting 1,107 teachers from Damascus, Dar'a, Quneitra and Rural Damascus.

Capacity building for psychosocial support and mental health continues through training focused on art-based interventions with the goal of providing 81 community workers with the skills to help young adults and teenage children deal with the psychological repercussions of the crisis. More training on non-violent communication and conflict mediation was provided to community leaders, volunteers, psychologists, and sociologists from six local NGOs and line ministries in Lattakia and Tartous.

### **7,000 women received reproductive health services**

Twenty-nine mobile teams provided reproductive health services to 5,200 particularly vulnerable women in As-Sweida, Damascus, Hama, Homs, Rural Damascus and Tartous. Additionally, 1,800 women residing in Aleppo, Damascus, Rural Damascus and Tartous received emergency obstetric care services, including safe deliveries for 420 women facilitated by the reproductive health voucher programme.

### **Remedial education enables children to catch up on schooling missed**

Remedial education is an alternative means of delivering learning opportunities to children who have missed out on schooling over the last months and years due to internal displacement and dropout. It is a key component of the education sector responses under SHARP 2014 and the Education Sector aims to expand remedial education opportunities for children across Syria, in particular through the more than 830 school clubs active at the community level. Remedial education classes and school clubs are opportunities for vulnerable children to continue learning, to catch up with school classes, and to enjoy recreational activities (i.e. sports, music) as part of psychosocial support.

### **Nutrition assessment prepares for launch**

As less than 30 per cent of functioning public hospitals have malnutrition service provision, the Health Sector aims to build the capacity of health providers towards integrating breastfeeding into the provision of health services during emergencies. Sixty nutritionists and health workers at the primary health level from Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, As-Sweida, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs, Idleb, Lattakia, Quneitra, Rural Damascus and Tartous participated in this capacity-building initiative.

A pilot nutrition assessment in Lattakia is being finalized and trainings of enumerators on nutrition indicators, measurements and data collection methodologies are underway to underpin the launch, planned for mid-March, of the Nutrition Sector assessment. Ministry of Health staff will collect data from a sample of 3,000 children in all Syrian governorates except Ar-Raqqa.

## More than 2.5 million Syrian refugees

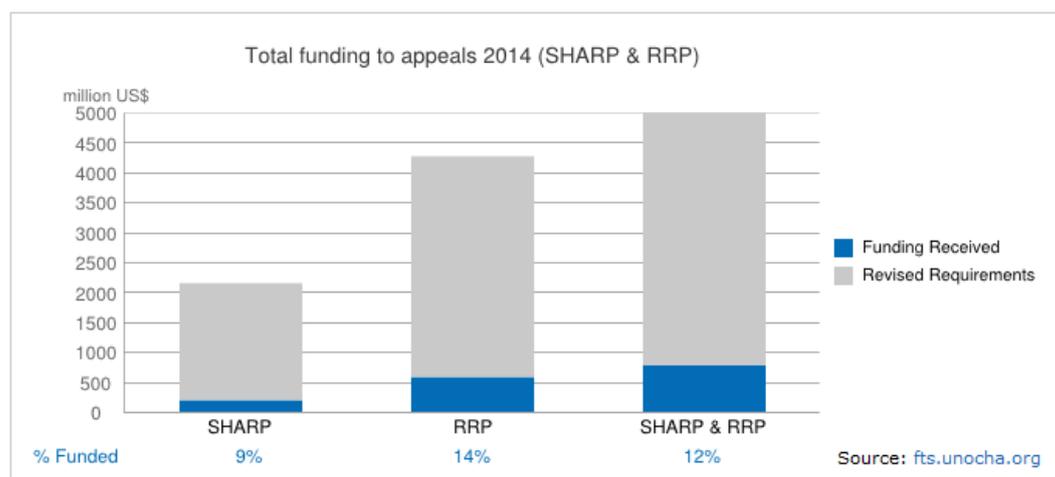
Country	Refugees registered and/or assisted awaiting registration as of 12 March 2014
Egypt	135,030
Iraq	226,934
Jordan	584,600
Lebanon	962,385
Turkey	634,788
North Africa	19,697
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,563,434</b>

Source: UNHCR as of 12 March 2014. For updated figures and more information: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. The above figures are based on numbers registered in each country and/or those who are assisted while waiting for registration.

## Funding overview

### Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan only funded 9 per cent

As the first quarter of 2014 draws to a close, the 2014 Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan is only funded at 9 per cent. Lack of funding hinders humanitarian actors' capacity to procure necessary supplies in such a challenging context. Sectors have noted that plans for April and May might be altered to deliver less than that which was identified as urgent needs if more funds are not allocated.



For further information, please contact:

**Raul Rosende**, Head of Office, Syria, [rosende@un.org](mailto:rosende@un.org), Tel. (+963) 953 300 075

**Moria Little**, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, [littlem@un.org](mailto:littlem@un.org), Tel. (+1) 917 689-3058

OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at [syria.unocha.org](http://syria.unocha.org) | [www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org) | [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)