Review of the Netherlands' contribution to the humanitarian response
to the Syria Crisis: 2011-2014

COUNTRY STUDY FOR EVALUATION OF
DUTCH HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE 2009-2014

April 2015

HumanitarianStrategy
Consult
Amsterdam

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This study was commissioned by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB), Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ACU	Assistance Coordination Unit
AJACS	Access to Justice and Community Security Project
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHF	Cooperative Housing Foundation
CRSF	Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework
DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (European Commission)
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DSH	Directorate for Stability and Humanitarian Assistance
ECHO	European Union Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FoS	Friends of Syria
FSA	Free Syrian Army
HA	humanitarian action
HC/RC	Humanitarian Coordinator /Regional Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country team
IAF	Islamic Action Front
IATF	Inter-Agency Task Force
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IEHK	Interagency Emergency Health Kits
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent
IHH	Human Rights and Freedoms Humanitarian Aid Foundation
IMC	International Medical Corps
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRD	International Relief and Development
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
ITS	Informal Tented Settlement
JOD	Jordanian Dinar
JRP	Jordan Resilience Plan
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
LCPS	Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LHIF	Lebanon Humanitarian Inter-Agency Forum
MoFAE	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoPH	Ministry of Public Housing
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MSF (OCA)	Medecins Sans Frontieres (Operational Centre Amsterdam)
MSF (OCG)	Medecins Sans Frontieres (Operational Centre Geneva)
MSNA	Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment
n.d.	no date given
NFI	Non-Food Items
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council

PDES	Policy Development and Evaluation Service (UN)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PYD	Democratic Union Party
RAIS	Refugee Assistance Information System
Res Rep	Resident Representative
RHC	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator
ROV	Refugee Outreach Volunteer
RRP	Regional Response Plan
SAMS	Syrian American Medical Society Foundation
SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society
SCI	Save the Children International
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SHARP	Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan
SHRC	Syria Higher Relief Committee
SINA	Syria Integrated Needs Assessment
SJAC	Syria Justice and Accountability Centre
SNAP	Syria Needs Assessment Project
SNC	Syrian National Coalition
SRAD	Syrian Refugee Assistance Directorate
SRCD	Syrian Refugee Coordination Department
SVW	Stichting Vluchtelingen Werk (Foundation for Refugee Work)
UCAP	Unconditional Cash Programme
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Force
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOSAT	United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSMIS	United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
VAF	Vulnerability Assessment Framework
VASyr	Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees
VDC	Violations Documentation Centre
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WCH	War Child Holland
WFP	World Food Programme
WVI	World Vision International
WWW	Who is doing What Where

Executive summary

This report examines the Netherlands contribution to the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis and the impact on neighbouring countries in the period 15 March 2011 to 31 December 2014. Data and other types of information used for the analysis are actual until 31 December.

The study addresses the key question *To what extent and how has the central objective of the Netherlands' humanitarian assistance policy, i.e. to provide humanitarian assistance in an effective way, been realised?* The scope of this study is dominated by the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) within Syria and the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP) in neighbouring countries, coordinated respectively by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), which received the bulk of Netherlands humanitarian funding.

Netherlands humanitarian policy, although not deliberately serving political objectives, is analyzed in the context of broader foreign, asylum and resettlement policy consideration. The Netherlands foreign policy response to the Syrian crisis was largely consistent and principled, and based on international law, human rights and humanitarian principles. For instance, Netherlands support for EU sanctions is consistent with its principled stand on the Syrian regime's human rights violations. On the other hand, the Netherlands offers asylum and resettlement to only a very small proportion of Syrian refugees and in comparison with more welcoming asylum and resettlement policies of Germany and Sweden. The Netherlands government's policy that Syrian refugees are best hosted in the region, and that it supports the main refugee hosting countries in the region with humanitarian assistance underscores the importance of supporting host countries' sustained ability to meet the needs of Syrian refugees, and of humanitarian agencies delivering aid.

From 2012 until the end of 2014, the Netherlands government contributed in total €104.05 million in assistance to help address the growing humanitarian needs in Syria and in neighbouring countries. The Netherlands also significant amounts of global core funding to UN agencies and other international humanitarian agencies. It can be argued that overall the Netherlands meets its 'fair share' in carrying the international burden of the humanitarian consequences of the Syria crisis. Netherlands financial resources for humanitarian purposes were made available in a relatively timely manner when measured against UN agencies' appeals. On the other hand, while SHARP and RRP appeals between the end of 2012 and 2015 combined increased by more than seven-fold, Netherlands financial allocations in that same period less than doubled. Furthermore, given the Netherlands emphasis on UN coordinated assistance, the timeliness of the Netherlands humanitarian response strongly correlates with that of the UN. Due to mainly political factors beyond the remit of humanitarian agencies, this caused significant delays and poor access especially in the case of SHARP.

UN-OCHA launched SHARP in 2012 appealing for US$ 348 million to US$ 2.9 billion at the end of 2014. UN agencies and partners in Syria responded relatively slowly as they failed to negotiate immediate access with a reluctant Syrian regime. SHARP funding requests since December 2012 more than doubled while the growth in total needs (measured in number of persons in need) in that same period more than tripled indicating that UN agencies and partners struggled to respond proportionately to the rapidly worsening scope of the crisis. In terms of reported numbers of people reached, the response under SHARP was most successful in food, health and WASH. In contrast, in most other clusters and sectors assistance fell significantly short of existing needs. Opposition controlled territories within Syria have been relatively under-serviced

compared to regime-held areas despite UN Security Council authorization of cross-border assistance without gaining prior permission from the Syrian government. The delivery of sufficient humanitarian assistance within Syria encountered organizational, funding, security and administrative obstacles for organizations operating from Damascus and those involved in cross-border aid alike. These obstacles have had a detrimental effect on the timeliness and effectiveness of aid delivery, but they also challenged agencies' ability to deliver according to humanitarian principles.

While opposition-held areas remained relatively under-serviced by agencies operating under SHARP, cross-border assistance provided by a growing number of INGOs, especially from southern Turkey, gained significance. Recognizing this, the Dutch government in December 2013 issued a tender for cross-border humanitarian assistance to hard-to-reach areas in Syria and for unregistered Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan. Four Dutch NGOs were awarded, two of them in a consortium with experienced international NGOs. At the time of writing their results were not yet reported, but a preliminary assessment of their performance against key tender requirements suggests that Netherlands funding for cross-border assistance into Syria is making an important contribution despite facing significant security and administrative challenges. Overall, however, cross-border assistance generally has not been sufficient to meet the large and growing needs in areas under opposition control as serious needs gaps remain.

Humanitarian challenges have also mounted in Syria's neighbouring countries receiving a large influx of Syrian refugees, especially in Lebanon and Jordan. Overall, the UNHCR-led response under the RRP has been effective and is generally considered to be successful. The Netherlands government contributions to the RRP helped UNHCR and its partners to meet needs of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees and to effectively coordinate the response. Despite some shortcomings, RRP targets when measured in terms of outputs, coverage and quality were largely achieved, particularly when analysing the protection, shelter and basic sectors. The overall strong endorsements by its operating and implementing partners indicate that UNHCR successfully created conditions in terms of funding, coordination and advocating authorities, and it enabled its partners to deliver humanitarian services and ensure the protection of the refugees both in Lebanon and in Jordan. However, there are indications of a widening gap between outputs and outcomes, suggesting that factors outside the control of UNHCR (including host government policies and funding levels) are starting to take their toll among the Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan.

The delivery of relatively high standards of services seems no longer feasible given dwindling donor resources. The dire situation in which most refugees find themselves is exacerbated by continuously contracting protection space due to Lebanese and Jordanian Government policies driven by security concerns and the socio-economic impact on host communities. In response, the system is now adopting a resilience and stabilization approach. Yet especially in the case of Lebanon limited capabilities in terms of governance and institutional capacity raise important question marks over the viability of this strategy shift, however prompted by donor realities. Concerns are that essential humanitarian assistance in a context of continuing or even rising needs will be negatively affected. Against this background, a number of existing challenges in the delivery of assistance (largely due to underfunding) risk being magnified while protection space is increasingly narrowing, especially in Jordan. These challenges included continued problems in providing adequate shelter especially during harsh winter conditions and sub-optimal coverage of assistance especially to those living outside camps.

The experience with humanitarian assistance in Syria and neighbouring countries, and the Netherlands' significant contribution to it, points up to a number of observations that are immediately relevant for future policy-making by donors and humanitarian agencies generally. Firstly, and given the relatively delayed humanitarian response at the onset of the Syrian crisis, donors need to consider complementary ways, such as by NGO financing, to allow for access to those in need while the UN develops coordination platforms especially at the onset of major humanitarian emergencies. Secondly, a relative dearth of reliable data on the impact of humanitarian assistance imply that UNHCR and other UN agencies should be requested and better enabled to provide comprehensive and reliable data on project outcomes and aid impact. Fourthly, and given the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis, humanitarian agencies will need to continue to focus on providing humanitarian assistance to people in need in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, and be enabled to do so by donors. Resilience and other development agendas should be financed from non-humanitarian facilities such as the World Bank and UNDP programmes.

More specifically for the Netherlands' humanitarian policy, our preliminary assessment of the experience with NGOs' cross-border assistance into Syria warrants further emphasis on supporting such activities especially as long as UN-agencies' servicing of opposition-held areas continues to falls short in meeting urgent and expanding needs. Such stepped up efforts would have to be accompanied by support for the improvement of coordination mechanisms for Damascus based UN-agencies, UN-OCHA in southern Turkey and cross-border NGOs. Concerning the refugee-hosting countries and given the gradual contraction of protection space, the Netherlands should continue, and where possible strengthen, diplomacy in collaboration with other (European) donors to provide political leverage to UNHCR when it critically engages with officials in Lebanon and Jordan.

Finally, and given the importance of impact evaluations for accountability, lessons learned and continued public support for its humanitarian policies, the Netherlands should consider making funding conditional to impact evaluations of any sizeable grant.

1   Introduction

1.1   Syria in Crisis

Since mid-2011 Syria and neighbouring countries witnessed a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions and intensity. At the end of March 2011 protestors across Syria challenged nearly 50 years of authoritarian rule by the Ba'ath party and regime elites centred around President Bashar al-Assad and his relatives. Popular discontent was at least partly fuelled by the regime's selective economic reforms since the early 2000s that alienated key regime constituencies especially in the countryside. Since Bashar al-Assad's succession of his father Hafez, who died in 2000, a small elite reaped the fruits of selective economic reforms due to privileged access to resources as the regime tried to reconstitute its support base by way of a dependent and politically docile business community. Corruption and general government neglect also hampered an effective response to severe drought affecting the agricultural sector since 2006, and causing rising poverty and displacement in much of Syria's countryside.

The Syrian regime responded with heavy force, ultimately undermining protestors' resolve to use only peaceful means as some took up arms to protect their communities with the help of defecting soldiers, becoming loosely organized under the umbrella of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) by the autumn of 2011. The militarization of the Syrian uprising coincided with a decidedly sectarian turn of an increasingly violent conflict. The regime rallied its supporters primarily within the Alawite minority by highlighting an existential threat by the largely Sunni Arab protestors to whom it attributed crude sectarian motives. Protestors and newly formed armed groups increasingly framed their cause in sectarian terms especially as extremist Islamist ideology began to inform and justify an armed struggle to bring down the regime and annihilate its supporters. Meanwhile, and largely for tactical reasons, the regime made concessions to the country's Kurdish community, first by granting citizenship to stateless Kurds, and then by allowing the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)-aligned Democratic Union Party (PYD) to effectively control parts of Kurdish-majority areas in the northeast of the country.

When the uprising went into its second year, many Islamist Jihadist insurgents and a variety of armed 'popular committees' supporting the regime emerged. The regime escalated its indiscriminate use of heavy weaponry, and insurgency groups embarked on an increasingly aggressive campaign to 'liberate' Syrian territories from regime control. Civilians became the prime target as regime forces pounded entire towns, neighbourhoods and villages suspected of sympathizing with or supporting insurgency groups. More limited weaponry available to rebel groups did not prevent them from responding in kind as they targeted Alawite, Christian and Shi'ite communities who came to depend on the regime for their survival.

All sides in the conflict received foreign support as the Syrian crisis came to be firmly placed at the intersection of the region's sectarian fold lines. By early 2013 Lebanese, Iranian and Iraqi Shi'ite armed groups and fighters reinforced the regime's military capabilities while Muslim volunteers from all over the world joined various Islamist armed groups, most notably Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda offshoot established in January 2012, and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a group of Iraqi-led Jihadists originating from the insurgency against the US occupation of Iraq. The two groups fell out over competing leadership claims, prompting Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, to lead ISIS' aggressive campaign in both Iraq and Syria. Due to its superior capabilities and

resources, in combination with its extremist appeal, ISIS attracted most of the foreign fighters away from Jabhat al-Nusra and other Jihadist groups.

By early 2014, the Syrian conflict had mutated into a complex, multi-layered war between regime forces and insurgents, FSA groups against extremist Islamist groups, and ISIS versus more moderate Syrian Islamist groups and Jabhat al-Nusra. Civilians were caught in the middle of these conflicts as they endured the repression and brutality of the groups controlling the areas in which they lived while being targeted, besieged and starved from the outside for 'hosting' them.

Figure 1.1: Syria's Fragmentation and Violence, December 2014
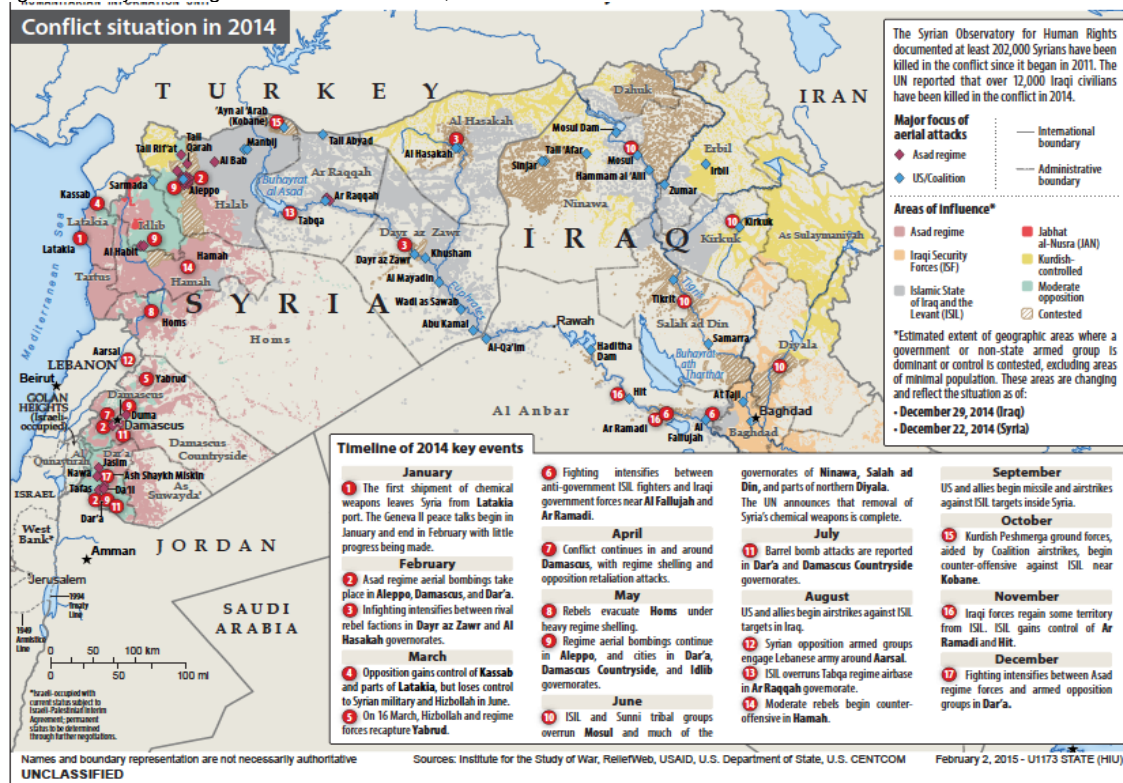
Source: U.S. Department of State, Humanitarian Information Unit, January 2015

Under these conditions, millions of Syrians moved to other areas in the country or fled to neighbouring countries and beyond, placing a growing burden on host communities and becoming entangled in, and accentuating, their hosts' own internal differences and conflicts.

International perceptions shifted in the course of the Syrian conflict from viewing the Syrian uprising as an opportunity for a more inclusive or democratic regime to a more defensive strategy when realizing that this scenario was unlikely to materialize soon, and fearing regional and international implications of an aggressive ISIS in both Syria and Iraq. International responses included EU anti-regime sanctions and US calls on the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to step down, UN-brokered cease fires, a joint UN/Arab League monitoring mission to Syria in early 2012, international support to a Syrian opposition platform, the Syrian National Council (SNC) based in Istanbul, an international effort led by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons arsenal and capabilities following the use of chemical weapons against civilians in August 2013, and a UN-organised peace conference in Montreux and Geneva in January and February 2014. Yet from the start of

the conflict, sharp international differences, exemplified by Russia's and China's repeatedly vetoing UN Security Council resolutions, caused most of these initiatives to fail in ending the conflict.

Concerns heightened in June 2014 when ISIS captured key Iraqi cities of Mosul and Tikrit adjacent to the border with Syria, linking the group's control of territories on each side, coinciding with the threat of radicalized volunteers returning to their home countries. A broad US-led coalition emerged in September 2014 to counter ISIS advances and attack its military and terrorist capabilities, with air strikes in Iraq and Syria. Although by early 2015 this helped to drive out ISIS fighters from the Kurdish-dominated area in and around Kobane ('Ayn al-Arab) in northern Syria, expectations are that it will be much more difficult to dislodge the group from other areas in Syria due to the lack of potent Syrian allies providing ground support.

Syria entered a cycle of violence due to the conflict's multiple drivers, the regime's resilience, the opposition's fragmentation, the crisis' links with armed conflict in Iraq, and regional stakes combined with ongoing international differences over how to resolve it. Likewise, the challenges to meet the vast humanitarian needs evolving from the crisis look increasingly difficult to resolve in the foreseeable future.

1.2   Goals, Scope and Structure of the Study

This study examines the Netherlands contribution to the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis and its impact on neighbouring countries. As the bulk of Netherlands humanitarian funding is channelled through UN-led humanitarian programmes initiated for Syria, the Syria Humanitarian Assistance response Plan (SHARP), and for neighbouring countries, the Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP), both programmes are the main scope of this evaluation study. The current study presents an assessment of the Netherlands' humanitarian assistance (HA) policy development, its implementation, and whether the envisaged results were achieved. It identifies lessons learned from experiences pertaining to the implementation of humanitarian assistance in the context of the Syrian crisis.

The central evaluation question is:[1]

> *To what extent and how has the central objective of the Netherlands' humanitarian assistance policy, i.e. to provide humanitarian assistance in an effective way, been realised?*

The report first describes and assesses the full range of Netherlands foreign policy positions and activities in relation to the Syrian crisis, including diplomatic efforts and Syria-related funding. More specifically, Chapter 2 assesses the timeliness and responsiveness of Netherlands humanitarian policies relevant to the Syrian crisis.

Chapter 3 describes and explores the evolution and features of the crisis since the start of the uprising in 2011. It identifies growing humanitarian needs, key humanitarian actors, their coordination mechanisms, and assesses the results humanitarian assistance achieved in terms of meeting needs. Special attention is given to cross-border and cross-line humanitarian assistance, including the efforts of Netherlands-funded NGOs. The chapter concludes by listing key obstacles and challenges faced by humanitarian actors in Syria.

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[1] Terms of reference for the consultancy for the country study Syria (see appendix 1).

Chapters 4 and 5 provide an overview of the humanitarian response (assistance and protection) provided to Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan respectively. As the Netherlands humanitarian policy favours UN-coordinated mechanisms, this part of the study focuses on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners. The two chapters seek to contribute to a better understanding of the effectiveness and sustainability of the Netherlands government's support. Chapter 6 concludes our analysis, discusses future prospects, and considers implications for further Netherlands humanitarian policy development.

1.3 Approach and Limitations

We used three methodologies for collecting data and qualitative information including:

- briefings and interviews with relevant staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and DSH in The Hague;
- a literature review, and;
- field visits to southern Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

Our analysis is a triangulation of findings from these methodologies and sources. When we obtained information during our briefings in The Hague we sought to confirm our findings with counterparts at regional headquarters in southern Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, and again at field-office level within these countries. Accordingly, and where possible, we triangulated data obtained from Netherlands government officials, UNHCR staff and partners, UN-Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) staff, civil society representatives, local government officials and refugees during home visits or in focus groups.

The large scope of the study caused us to rely on available literature, mostly operational reports and updates, in addition to third-party evaluations and other analyses. Likewise, the analysis of the humanitarian situation and response in Syria is heavily reliant on our review of the literature, as we had no access to Syria for interviews.

In the refugee hosting countries we focused on the coordination platforms: UNHCR in Jordan and Lebanon, and NGO cross-border coordination platforms and that of OCHA in Turkey. In Lebanon and Jordan we concentrated on partner perspectives on each element of the UNHCR project cycle. We chiefly engaged at the operational level, meaning that we spent most of our time in the field speaking to both UNHCR operatives and partners.

Although we believe that the current study provides accurate data and useful insights into the Netherlands humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, a number of limitations affected our preparations. Most importantly, we were unable to visit Syria, as the Netherlands government does not currently maintain diplomatic relations with the government in Damascus, which made it impossible to conduct an official mission. We were also unable to visit areas under the control of various opposition forces, primarily because of deteriorating security conditions in these areas. Although the Syrian crisis affected all neighbouring countries, the current report does not cover developments in Turkey and Iraq.

UNHCR, UN-OCHA and Syria ALNAP web-portals[2] were the starting point of our literature and data review. Although ample information is available, and is mostly well

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[2] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php, http://www.unocha.org/syria and http://www.syrialearning.org

organised, we did not come across sufficiently detailed data and analysis on outcomes and impact. This evidently hampered our efforts at more robust analysis.

At the time this report was being prepared, the four Netherlands-funded NGOs involved in assistance to unregistered refugees and cross-border assistance had not yet reported the results of their programmes, so this reports only contains a preliminary assessment of the degree to which they met key requirements set by the Netherlands government tender of January 2014.

Both SHARP and the RRP periodically reported estimates of the number of especially vulnerable persons reached with humanitarian assistance. Such data were important to assess the results of the humanitarian effort. Yet these data were not available for the entire period of the scope of the study. Data on 'people reached' mostly did not specify by what regularity assistance was provided or whether the needs of those reached were sufficiently met. It also remained unclear whether and how double-counting by multiple agencies involved in the same aid deliveries was avoided. Data are collected in different formats making aggregation very difficult or even impossible. For all these reasons, references in the current report to humanitarian agencies' data need to be interpreted with a degree of caution.

2. The Netherlands Response to the Syria Crisis

This chapter provides an overview of the Netherlands response to the Syrian crisis. These include foreign, humanitarian policy, asylum and resettlement policies. It specifically assesses the extent to which Netherlands foreign policies related to humanitarian policies, whether humanitarian assistance was proportionate, timely and responsive to growing needs.

2.1. Foreign Policy Response

Netherlands foreign policy via-a-vis the Syrian crisis pursued a set of priorities categorized along four main tracks: a) support for an inclusive political transition (political track); b) encouraging early recovery and reconstruction (development track); c) supporting security and regional stability by containing spill-over effects (security track), and; d) countering impunity (accountability track).[3]

The political track translated into strong support for sanctions on the regime imposed by the EU from the start of the conflict. The Netherlands government took an active role in the gradual increasing of EU sanctions, starting on 10 May 2011. It pressed for sanctions against a growing number of Syrian regime incumbents and –supporters. Netherlands suggestions also prompted the Council to make provisions for those who severed their ties with the regime, in order to encourage defections.[4] In June 2012, Netherlands authorities collaborated with the British government in returning a Russian arms shipment, destined for Syria, when the vessel passed the Netherlands coast.[5]

On 18 August the Netherlands declared that it considered President Bashar al-Assad no longer fit to rule and called for him to step down, in alignment with other EU member states. Netherlands Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal also called on the UN Security Council to instruct the International Criminal Court to initiate Syrian regime war crimes investigations in preparation for possible referrals and prosecutions.[6] Diplomatic efforts by others included an Arab League monitoring mission in late December 2011, and the establishment of the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) following UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2043 (21 April 2012). These initiatives failed to curb the escalating violence in Syria and with evidence amassing of regime atrocities, in March 2012 the Netherlands government closed its embassy in Damascus due to "the worsening security situation and in order to send a political message to Syria".[7] Three months later, the Netherlands and Belgian governments jointly declared the Syrian ambassador to both countries, as *persona non grata*.[8] The Syrian government retaliated shortly after by expelling the highest-ranking Netherlands diplomat in Syria, *charge d'affaires* Janet Alberda, who operated from the EU Delegation headquarters in Damascus following the closure of the Netherlands embassy.

The Netherlands joined the The Friends of Syria (FoS) group --an international diplomatic initiative aiming to negotiate diplomatic solutions outside the UN Security Council-- during its first meeting on 24 February 2012 in Tunis. The group included mainly Western and Arab Gulf countries and functioned as platform to call on moderate

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[3] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (13 January 2014).
[4] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (19 April 2012).
[5] Boon (19 June 2012).
[6] ANP (18 August 2011).
[7] Rijksoverheid (14 March 2012).
[8] As the Syrian ambassador continued to represent his country with the EU institutions, and no EU decision followed to expel him, he remained in Brussels.

Syrian opposition groups to "improve their collaboration, inclusiveness and representativeness", and support the Syrian opposition in pursuing these ends.[9] The Netherlands also participated in the FoS economic recovery and sanctions committees established in April 2012.[10] On 20 September 2012, the Netherlands, with Tunisia and Canada, co-hosted a meeting of the FoS sanctions committee in The Hague, discussing ways to effectively enforce sanctions against the Syrian regime and counter any evasion attempts.[11] The EU formally recognized the Syrian National Council, established in October 2011, as "a legitimate representative of Syrians seeking democratic change."[12] The Netherlands recognised the SNC by sending Janet Alberda to Istanbul, the seat of many Syrian opposition groups and activists. Netherlands representation in Istanbul was upgraded from "special advisor" to "special envoy for Syria", at ambassador level, with the appointment of Marcel Kurpershoek, in August 2013.[13]

In November 2012, the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) was established to bring under one umbrella the various Syrian opposition groups and activists, including the Syrian National Council. Following France's recognition of the SNC, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg recognized it as "the legitimate representative of the Syrian people."[14] At a gathering of the FoS in Marrakech on 12 December 2012, around 130 countries followed suit. Meanwhile, the Netherlands government reiterated its insistence on a peaceful, political solution for the Syrian conflict by supporting Kofi Annan, the joint UN / Arab League envoy for Syria, and his six-point peace plan launched in March 2012. It seconded a Netherlands military officer to the Geneva-based team of analysts advising Annan's United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS), established on 21 April 2012. The Netherlands government also offered personnel to liaise between UNSMIS offices in Geneva and Damascus[15] and co-financed the UN Department of Political Affairs, which provides advisory and administrative support to the UN special envoy for Syria, and coordinates post-conflict planning with other UN agencies.

Netherlands and other FoS members' position was that the SNC represent the Syrian opposition in a negotiated political transition in Syria that would end the violence. When the Annan Plan collapsed, the Action Group for Syria, including the EU, designed the negotiation parameters in the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012.[16] In anticipation of talks, and on request of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Clingendael - Netherlands Institute for International Relations provided negotiation and diplomacy training to SNC delegates preparing them for talks in Montreux and Geneva hosted by the UN following an agreement between the U.S. and Russia, and attended by representatives of the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad, between 22 until 31 January 2014.[17] In tandem with these initiatives, the Netherlands Special Envoy for Syria (SAS) oversees the 'SAS Fund', designed to finance "flexible" and "quick impact" projects in Syria and neighbouring countries. The Istanbul team assessed many civil society initiatives not exceeding €25,000 and outside the realm of humanitarian assistance. The Directorate for Stability and Humanitarian Assistance (DSH) approved a number of projects with a total of €500,000. In the first year these included support to a magazine,

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[9] Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (28 February 2012).
[10] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Raad Algemene Zaken en Raad Buitenlandse Zaken (16 April 2012).
[11] "Statement by the Friends of the Syrian People International Working Group on Sanctions," (20 September 2012).
[12] Council of the European Union (27 February 2012).
[13] In January 2015 Kurpershoek was succeeded by Nikolaos van Dam.
[14] "Benelux-Message at Group of Friends-Meeting Marrakech," (12 December 2012)..
[15] UNSMIS eventually did not need the extra Netherlands assistance. Tweede Kamer de Staten-Generaal, Raad Algemene Zaken en Raad Buitenlandse Zaken (18 juni 2012).
[16] "Action Group for Syria: Final communique," (30 June 2012).
[17] Clingendael (17 September 2014).

a centre for civilian participation and debate, and hospital supplies. The Special Envoy for Syria requested the fund to continue for a second year with the same amount.

The Netherlands position on the dual imperative of a political transition and respect for human rights in Syria was echoed in its voting behaviour in key international forums including the UN General Assembly (see Table 2.2) denouncing the Syrian regime and its forces' human rights violations and brutality.

Table 2.2: Netherlands voting in the UN General Assembly on Syria

res. 66/176, 19/12/2011	"Expressing concern about the continuing lack of commitment by the Syrian authorities to fully and immediately implement the Plan of Action" by the Arab League.	The Netherlands votes with 132 other member states in favour, out of a total of 193 member states.
res. 66/253A, 16/02/2012	"Strongly condemns the continued widespread and systematic violations of human rights and basic freedoms by the Syrian authorities"; "stresses again the importance of ensuring accountability and the need to end impunity."	The Netherlands votes with 136 other member states in favour.
res. 66/253B, 03/08/2012	"Expressing grave concern" at the escalation of violence, "in particular the widespread and systematic gross violations of human rights and the continued use of heavy weapons by the Syrian authorities against the Syrian population"; "expressing grave concern at the threat by the Syrian authorities to use chemical or biological weapons.'	The Netherlands votes with 132 other member states in favour.
res. 67/183, 20/12/2012	"Strongly condemning" military attacks by Syrian armed forces into neighbouring countries; expressing "grave concern" at the escalation of violence in Syria.	The Netherlands votes with 134 other member states in favour.
res. 67/262, 15/05/2013	Expressing "outrage at the rapidly increasing death toll" and denouncing Syrian authorities for failing to prosecute "crimes against humanity"; "concern" at the vulnerable positions of children and women in the conflict.	The Netherlands votes with 106 other member states in favour.
res. 68/182, 18/12/2013	Expressing "outrage at the continuing escalation of violence" in Syria and human rights violations; expressing "alarm at the failure of the [Syrian authorities] to protect its population"; expressing "grave concern at the spread of extremism and extremist groups"; "strongly condemning" the use of chemical weapons.	The Netherlands votes with 126 other member states in favour.

The Netherlands government took the position that crimes against humanity committed in Syrian need to be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC), based in The Hague. It repeatedly expressed dismay over disagreements within the UN Security Council preventing Syria's referral, including in Foreign Minister Timmermans' speech at the UN General Assembly meeting after the regime's alleged use of chemical weapons on 21 August 2013.[18] To prepare for future referral, the Netherlands government provides financial support to the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC), based in The Hague and staffed by Syrian and international human rights experts.[19] The Netherlands also supported initiatives highlighting Syrian women's rights.[20]

In response to the use of chemical weapons in the Eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus on 21 August 2013, Netherlands Foreign Minister Timmermans stated that "if it will be confirmed that chemical weapons have been used, then there should be consequences".[21] Unlike the U.S. government that threatened to carry out immediate air strikes against regime targets in Syria, the Netherlands government declared that UN weapons inspectors needed to be given time to investigate the attack while any prospective action should be authorised multilaterally.[22] Three weeks later, Timmermans welcomed the US- and Russian-led initiative to dismantle chemical weapons in Syria while expressing hope that the agreement "will lay the basis for peace

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[18] NOS (16 September 2013).
[19] The SJAC works to "ensure that human rights violations in Syria are comprehensively documented and preserved for transitional justice and peace-building." http://syriaaccountability.org/about/
[20] See "Side event Inclusive Transition: The role of women in political transition in the MENA-region," (n.d.) and UN Women (13 January 2014).
[21] Van den Dool (28 August 2013).
[22] Ibid.

negotiations involving all parties to the conflict."[23] The Netherlands hosts the headquarters of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which on 27 September 2013 was mandated to oversee and monitor the Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons. In addition, it provides personnel and logistical support to OPCW Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag and her team working on Syria.[24]

The Netherlands government opposes military support to opposition groups, instead insisting on diplomatic and political means, and arguing that "sending arms to the region will not bring a solution to the conflict any closer."[25] At the same time "it understands that, in case of reduced legitimacy of the incumbent regime and increased legitimacy of the armed opposition, the principle of non-intervention will come under pressure."[26] Disagreements over sending arms to the Syrian opposition threatened to undermine consensus in the European Council as United Kingdom and France favoured providing military support to the SNC and the FSA. On 28 February 2013, the Council agreed that an exception was to be made to the EU ban by allowing the supply of non-lethal military equipment to Syria provided that the SNC would be its sole recipient and that this would be only used to protect civilians.[27] The Netherlands government helped broker a further compromise that formally ended the EU arms embargo but deferred the actual dispatch of weaponry.[28] On 27 May 2013 the European Council declared that it allowed individual member states to send arms to the SNC, provided that adequate safeguards against misuse were put in place while noting that "member states will not export military technology and equipment" until a review due before 1 August 2013.[29]

Netherlands refusal for military support to Syrian opposition groups continued while extremist jihadist groups strengthened their positions on the battlefield. When Kurdish forces and ISIS engaged in Kobane ('Ayn al-'Arab), northern Syria, at the end of 2014, the Netherlands government reiterated its policy. It explained that while military support for Kurdish Peshmerga forces in northern Iraq was made possible by an agreement with the Iraqi government, such provisions were not possible in Syria.[30] However, in December 2014, the Netherlands Foreign Minister stated that the Netherlands considers non-military support to groups within the FSA.[31]

In January 2013, on the request of the Turkish government, the Netherlands Ministry of Defence contributed to the Netherlands Syrian crisis policies by sending Patriot anti-missile units and 270 accompanying military personnel to Adana, Turkey, to confront the threat of Syrian ballistic surface-to-surface missiles, used by Syrian forces a month earlier. On 15 November 2013, the Netherlands government decided to extend the deployment until January 2015 after which it recalled them as the threat was reduced.

Since the end of September 2014, Netherlands fighter jets have participated in US-led air strikes against ISIS in Iraq. The Netherlands government decided against joining air strikes in Syria, with Netherlands Foreign Minister Timmermans citing international legal support and lacking international consensus.[32]

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[23] Cited in Posthumus (14 September 2013).
[24] In December Sigrid Kaag left her position at the OPCW when she was appointed UN Special Representative to Lebanon.
[25] Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, Brief aan de Tweede Kamer (4 June 2013).
[26] Ibid.
[27] European Union (1 March 2013).
[28] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Raad Algemene Zaken en Raad Buitenlandse Zaken (4 June 2013).
[29] Council of the European Union (27 May 2013). The review did not occur.
[30] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (20 November 2014).
[31] Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (15 December 2014).
[32] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (20 November 2014).

The Netherlands continues to provide two staff officers to the United Nations Disengagement Force (UNDOF), and 12 observers to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).[33] UNDOF was involved in belligerent incidents in March 2013, and when a number of UNDOF peacekeepers were briefly abducted by militants in August 2014.

Guided by its development assistance policies the Netherlands contributed €2 million to the Syria Recovery Trust Fund, a multi-donor initiative by the FoS to finance early recovery projects and essential services within Syria in sectors such as water, health, electricity, education, food security, solid waste removal, justice agriculture, transportation, telecommunication, public enterprise, and housing.[34] Also within the framework of the FoS, the Netherlands contributed €6 million to the Access to Justice and Community Security Project (AJACS).[35] Lebanon's Syrian Crisis Trust Fund, established by the World Bank in collaboration with the Lebanese government in support of host communities, received €2.5 million Netherlands funding.[36]

2.2. Humanitarian Response

The Netherlands government aims to meet its 'fair share' of humanitarian assistance in Syria and neighbouring countries. The Netherlands participated in two international pledging conferences in Kuwait City (30 January 2013 and 15 January 2014), and in the Berlin conference on Syrian refugees on 28 October 2014. Netherlands Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Lilianne Ploumen visited Syrian refugees in Lebanon in April 2013, and again in Lebanon and Jordan in September 2013, and refugee camps in southern Turkey in June 2014.

The Netherlands government consistently declared that humanitarian principles lead its aid effort, and that the Syrian situation in this respect will be no exception, separating it from other policy objectives and an "integrated approach" toward the Syrian crisis otherwise:

> *Humanitarian assistance is not part of this integrated approach because humanitarian aid has other leading principles (neutrality, independence and impartiality). Furthermore, humanitarian assistance is not primarily aimed at stability in a country, but at alleviating human suffering. Yet many conflict situations are also humanitarian emergencies, and humanitarian assistance* [in these contexts] *can contribute to stabilization of a conflict.*[37]

From 2012 until the end of 2014, the Netherlands government contributed in total €104.05 million in assistance to help address the growing humanitarian needs in Syria and neighbouring countries.[38] Table 2.3 present an overview of these contributions.

Table 2.3: Netherlands Humanitarian Allocations and the Syrian Crisis

Organisation	Contribution EUR (million)			Total
	2012	**2013**	**2014**	

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[33] UNDOF oversees the 1974 cease-fire between Israel and Syria. UNTSO is attached to UNDOF and observes and reports on the situation in the Golan Heights.

[34] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (7 November 2014); "Syria Recovery Trust Fund," (n.d.).

[35] The AJACS program seeks to support the development of security and justice systems in opposition controlled Syria.

[36] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (14 October 2014).

[37] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (13 januari 2014).

[38] Minsterie van Buitenlandse Zaken (7 November 2014).

WFP	2	2	4	8
UNHCR	17	24	14	55
UNICEF	0.5	3		3.5
UNRWA		2.5		2.5
Netherlands Red Cross (to SARC)	3.3	3.75		7.05
IFRC			2	2
SVW	1	1		2
Save the Children		1		1
Amendment-Voordewind			23	23
	23.8	37.25	43	104.05

Source: Directorate for Stability and Humanitarian Assistance (DSH)

In addition, the Netherlands contributes annual core funding to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the UNHCR, the UN Relief and World Agency (UNRWA), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).[39] These funds help finance humanitarian action worldwide including in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

In September 2014 Minister Ploumen announced the establishment of a special Relief Fund for the period 2014-17, allocating €570 million on top of Netherlands regular expenditures on humanitarian assistance and emergency aid worldwide.[40] Assistance from the Emergency Fund is reserved for humanitarian organisations and -facilities including the CERF, UN agencies, the ICRC and NGOs meeting European Commission quality standards and signatories of the EU's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) Framework Partnership Agreement.[41] The Netherlands Relief Fund was created in response to the growing needs resulting from the world's five largest humanitarian emergencies including in Syria. Minister Ploumen indicated that for the remainder of 2014 additional €30 million will be directed to the WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF (€23 million) for their Syria crisis programmes and to various NGOs (€7 million, see below) conducting cross-border assistance and providing aid to non-registered refugees.[42]

Agency specific allocations make up around 75 percent of Netherlands contributions for the Syria crisis between 2012 and the end of 2014 as these were earmarked to various agencies working within the UN system and to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).[43] CERF allocations allow UN-OCHA to decide which funding is directed to UN agencies for Syria-related activities while competing for such allocations with humanitarian crises worldwide.[44] As in other major humanitarian emergencies, the Netherlands government has argued that this multilateral approach has a number of advantages.

> *In an international context the government aims at maximum aid effectiveness by way of better coordination. This implies, among other things, giving non-earmarked contributions where ever possible, so that the coordinating*

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[39] CERF: €55 million in 2014, WFP: €36 million in 2014, UNHCR: €33 million in 2014, UNRWA: €13 million in 2014, and ICRC: €25 million in 2014.
[40] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (19 september 2014).
[41] These NGOs currently are: Doctors Without Borders, Cordaid, ICCO, NRC, Oxfam Novib, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, War Child, World Vision, and ZOA.
[42] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken (30 September 2014).
[43] Netherlands contributions are allocated to these agencies' programmes directly, and are not in response to their appeals including SHARP and RRP.
[44] For 2014 the Netherlands is ranked the fourth largest donor to the CERF worldwide. UNOCHA (20 November 2014).

organisation will determine on the ground where needs are highest, and in order to prevent duplication and lacunas in assistance.[45]

By implication, the Netherlands places large confidence in the UN system to deliver in terms of adequate needs assessments, coordination and aid effectiveness: UN-OCHA in Syria and UNHCR in the neighbouring countries. In addition, the Netherlands government allocated significant funding to the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, through the Netherlands Red Cross, the IFRC and the ICRC, who implement these allocations directly or via the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC).

The Netherlands government became increasingly concerned that multilateral assistance failed to reach all areas in Syria. In early 2013, the Netherlands government intended to financially support the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU), of the SNC.[46] However, the ACU and the SNC more generally proved incapable to uphold accountability standards, causing the support to be withdrawn. While access by UN agencies to rebel-held areas within Syria remained limited, on 13 November 2013 the Netherlands Parliament adopted an amendment (Amendment Voordewind) calling for the release of funds for cross-border assistance by NGOs.[47] Whereas the amendment was mainly motivated by concerns over persecuted Christian communities in Syria,[48] the Netherlands government announced a €7 million tender for Netherlands registered NGOs to submit their proposals for cross-border assistance (€4 million) irrespective of intended beneficiaries ethnic or sectarian affiliation, and to non-registered Syrian refugees (€3 million) who were assumed to not being able to access UN-led assistance.[49] Four Netherlands NGOs were awarded based on the merits of their proposals. Cross-border assistance within Syria proposals were awarded a total of €6 million compared to €1 million for non-registered refugees. In September 2014, with the establishment of the new Emergency Fund, cross-border programme was extended with an additional other €7 million. Activities of the Netherlands-funded NGOs are discussed in Chapter 3 and 4.

2.3. Asylum and Resettlement Response

The Netherlands responded to Syrian refugee crisis on the premise that enabling neighbouring countries to better cope with the refugee crisis is preferable to receiving Syrian refugees outside the region, including in the Netherlands.[50] Cost efficiency considerations are cited to support this approach.[51] Given the rapidly growing number of Syrian refugees, and the strained capacities of neighbouring countries to host them, pressures mounted also on the Netherlands to allow more Syrian refugees to settle here. Syrians currently constitute the largest group of asylum-seekers in the European Union with a total of 174,650 applicants from April 2011 to November 2014.[52]

Figure 2.1: Syrian asylum applications in the EU

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[45] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (6 December 2012).
[46] Nieuwsbericht Rijksoverheid (6 maart 2013).
[47] Kamerstuk Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (13 November 2013).
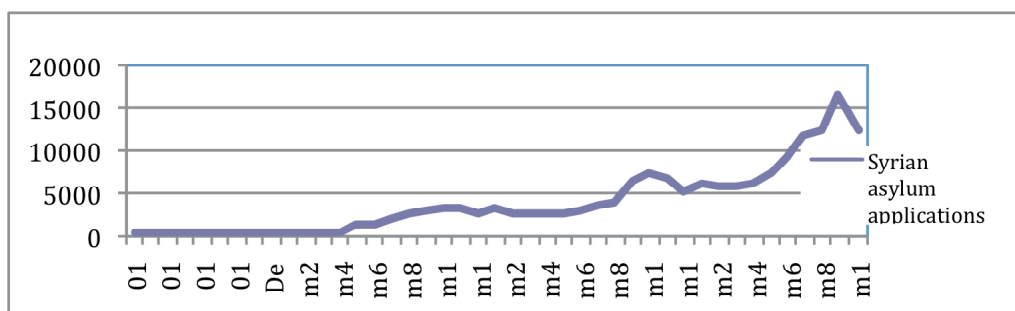[48] Christen Unie (12 February 2014).
[49] Ministerie voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (5 December 2013).
[50] See e.g.: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (2 augustus 2012).
[51] Secretary of State for Security and Justice F. Teeven in: Tweede Kamer de Staten-Generaal (29 October 2013).
[52] Data are from Eurostat: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/home

Source: Eurostat

Figure 2.2: Syrian asylum applications in the Netherlands
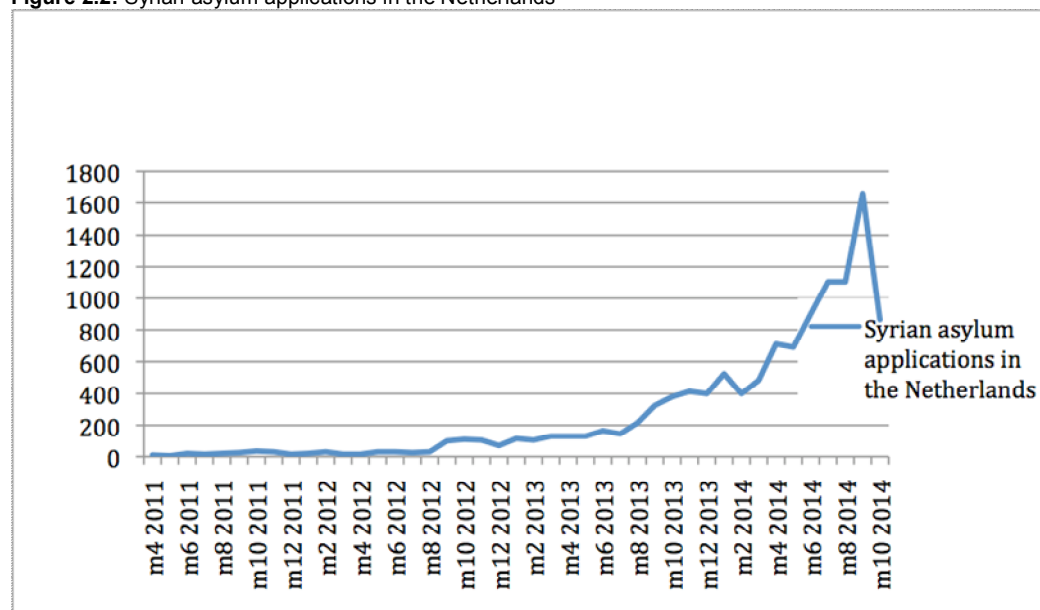
source: Eurostat

These figures would be considerably higher if Syrian refugees did not face so many obstacles throughout their journeys to Europe, which cause fewer numbers to enter, often illegally and at great risk to their lives.[53] In the same period a total of 12,375 Syrians applied for asylum in the Netherlands,[54] in addition to a growing number of stateless Palestinians coming from Syria.[55] The Netherlands authorities have shown some flexibility in terms of application documentation (including birth certificates) passports or identification cards. The Netherlands government also seeks ways to overcome such obstacles within the framework of the EU.[56] A large majority of Syrian applicants were granted individual asylum status as they were able to demonstrate grounds to fear persecution.[57]

The Netherlands government has pledged to accept 500 Syrian refugees, to be identified by the UNHCR, for resettlement in the Netherlands within the quota set for 2013 and

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[53] Amnesty International (13 December 2013), pp. 5-9.
[54] Eurostat: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/home
[55] Between September 2013 and September 2014, 2,185 stateless individuals applied for asylum in the Netherlands. Most originated from Syria. Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie (September 2014).
[56] Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (14 October 2014); Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (25 August 2014).
[57] Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (14 October 2014). In 2013 83 percent of Syrian applications for asylum were honoured, and mostly in a very short time. Bocker et.al. (2014), p. 45.

2014. [58] To date, a total of 331 Syrians resettled in the Netherlands where, in contrast with regular asylum seekers, they receive immediately private housing and are allowed to work. By the end of 2014, the UNHCR received worldwide a total of pledges to resettle 67,638 Syrian refugees, or 2 percent of total registered Syrian refugees.[59]

2.4. Analysis

2.4.1 Foreign Policy

The Netherlands foreign policy response to the Syrian crisis is largely consistent and principled. The Netherlands emphasis on international law and human rights are complementary to humanitarian principles as the framework for addressing the needs of civilians affected by the violence. However, the decision to break relations with the Syrian government meant that it could no longer be engaged diplomatically, thereby arguably reducing opportunities to contribute to a political solution for the crisis.[60] One year into the Syrian crisis Netherlands Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal appeared to be aware of this emerging problem, and suggested a negotiated exit from power in exchange for immunity from prosecution.[61] Although pragmatic and solution focussed, this new policy would have been at odds with the position on Syria's referral to the ICC.

Netherlands support for EU sanctions is consistent with its principled stand on the regime's human rights violations. However, the sanctions may have destabilized the regime's repression and counter-insurgency campaign,[62] but it ultimately failed to be decisive as the regime received sufficient support from Russia and Iran to continue its policies. The sanctions strengthened an illicit economy that disproportionally benefited leading elements among pro-regime groups.[63] Sanctions also worsened the socio-economic conditions for ordinary citizens, due to inflation and depreciation of the Syrian currency. Expectations that sanctions and asset freezes against individual regime supporters would prompt significant defections did not materialize.

The SNC welcomed Netherlands support but also expressed frustration over its refusal to provide military support to the Free Syrian Army. The debate about arming the opposition is still inconclusive, as the possibility that arms may fall into the hands of extremist groups lingers. On the other hand, it is argued that depriving moderate opposition groups of arms undermined their efforts to create a unified command, diminished their role in the uprising, and caused them to lose ground to more extreme groups. The policy also excluded the Netherlands from the 'core group' of countries within the Friends of Syria whose members do not rule out military assistance.

2.4.2 Humanitarian Response

The question of sufficient and proportionate humanitarian assistance from the Netherlands was subject of an appraisal of countries' "fair share" in humanitarian assistance in Syria and its neighbouring countries, prepared by Oxfam. Its 2014 "Fair Share Analysis", found the Netherlands to fall short of meeting its "fair share" by 32 percent, being outperformed by many other European and Arab Gulf countries.[64]

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[58] The Netherlands government declined to add the 250 Syrians for 2014 to the already accepted annual Netherlands quota of 500 resettled refugees worldwide. Tweede Kamer der Staten-generaal (24 November 2014).

[59] UNHCR (11 December 2014).

[60] Interview with Nikolaos van Dam in Bakker (3 September 2013).

[61] ANP (16 juni 2012); Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (30 May 2012).

[62] Friberg Lyme (2012), p. 13.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Oxfam (9 September 2014).

Responding in Netherlands Parliament to the report findings, Minister Ploumen noted that Oxfam failed to include sizeable non-earmarked contributions to CERF and UNHCR which may have been drawn on to finance Syria-related humanitarian activities. [65] The additional €30 million allocated for the remainder of 2014 from the new Relief Fund will cause the Netherlands to be within Oxfam's "green zone" of countries that exceed 90 percent of their "fair share".[66]

However, undifferentiated core funding to multilateral agencies also challenges visibility and, to some extent, accountability. Syrian members of the SNC approached Netherlands Foreign Affairs officials wondering about the Netherlands' stated support to and solidarity with the Syrian people, and Lebanese and Jordanian government officials similarly questioned Netherlands diplomats whether the Netherlands is sincere about its commitments to assist their countries in dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis.[67] From a strictly humanitarian perspective, this lack of visibility may be of secondary importance or even desirable, as "placing stickers on aid" imperils the neutrality, impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian assistance.[68]

Non-earmarked multilateral funding also complicates attribution of responsibility for (under-)performance. In the Syrian crisis this has prompted some specific dilemmas. For instance, in the context of the UN's mixed record in terms of access inside Syria, including to rebel-held territories, SNC officials have called on the Netherlands government to stop prioritizing UN agencies in receiving financial contributions and look for alternative ways to deliver aid.[69]

We observe that financial resources for humanitarian purposes were made available in a relatively timely manner when measured against UN agencies' appeals. As detailed in table 3.1 and in chapters 4 and 5, UN agencies presented their first SHARP and RRP appeals for Syria and neighbouring countries in December 2012; and in this light the Netherlands contributions totalling €23.8 million in 2012, excluding core contributions to UN agencies and the CERF, point up to a timely response. Yet especially at the onset of the humanitarian crisis in Syria the volume of the early Netherlands response was rather modest in comparison with the large amount of the first revised SHARP appeal for 2013.

Given the Netherlands emphasis on UN coordinated assistance, the timeliness of the Netherlands humanitarian response strongly correlates with that of the UN. Especially in the case of SHARP, this was far from optimal (see 3.5.1). In order to mitigate against this, possible alternative avenues, such as NGOs, should receive larger emphasis. An internationally coordinated response takes time to organise, especially within Syria where numerous factors beyond the control of UN agencies worked against this. Furthermore, while UN-led coordination may well be viewed as a price worth paying for its assumed superior effectiveness, it underscores the importance of presenting evidence for this assumption.

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[65] Since the start of the Syrian crisis until the end of 2013, CERF allocated US$134 million to Syrian and neighbouring countries affected by the crisis, thereby making Syria the top recipient of CERF funding. CERF-OCHA (December 2013).

[66] On the other hand, and beyond the CERF allocations, there are no data to establish what portion of Netherlands core contributions to UN agencies have been allocated to the Syrian crisis.

[67] To increase awareness of Netherlands humanitarian assistance, the Netherlands embassy in Lebanon released a brochure detailing the Netherlands response. Kingdom of the Netherlands (January 2015).

[68] Telephone interview with Netherlands Foreign Affairs Ministry official, 17 December 2014.

[69] Abrahim Miro (Economy and Finance Minister for the Syrian Interim Government) cited in: Deira (4 June 2014).

From 2012 onwards to date the Netherlands has made significant financial allocations for humanitarian assistance involving the Syrian crisis and recently increased its contributions further. Yet while combined SHARP and RRP appeals between the end of 2012 and 2015 (see Chapter 3.1 and 4.2.1) increased by more than seven-fold, Netherlands financial allocations in that same period less than doubled (see Table 2.3), indicating that the increase of Netherlands allocations (as of most donor country contributions) did not keep pace with humanitarian needs as assessed by the UN agencies and partners.[70]

2.4.3 Asylum and Resettlement

Like most other EU member states the Netherlands is criticized for offering asylum and resettlement to only a very small number of Syrian refugees, compared to the scope of the crisis and the under-funded response, and in comparison with more welcoming asylum and resettlement policies of Germany and Sweden.[71] The Netherlands government responds to these criticisms by pointing out that Syrian refugees are best hosted in the region, and that it supports the main refugee hosting countries in the region Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey) with humanitarian assistance.[72] These arguments underline the importance of supporting host countries' sustained ability to meet the needs of Syrian refugees, and of humanitarian agencies delivering aid.

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[70] SHARP and RRP appeals combined: $598 million (end 2012), $4.4 billion (end 2014). Dutch allocations: €23.8 million (2012), €43 million (2014).

[71] In the last three years, Germany and Sweden together received 64 percent of all Syrian asylum applications in the EU. Germany offered 82 percent of the EU's total resettlement places for Syrians. Amnesty International (1 December 2014), p. 9.

[72] For a discussion see Botje and Alberts (5 September 2013).

3. Humanitarian Assistance in Syria

This chapter describes the rapidly rising humanitarian needs within Syria, key sectors of humanitarian concern, the main humanitarian actors involved in the aid effort, the resources at their disposal, and formal coordination mechanisms. The second part assesses timeliness and responsiveness, the number and proportion of people-in-need reached, and the nature and width of remaining needs-response gaps. It analyses cross-line and cross-border assistance, including by Netherlands-funded NGOs and concludes with an assessment of the adequacy of overall funding, humanitarian principles, access, and coordination challenges.

3.1. Overview

As the Syrian crisis entered its fifth year, an estimated 212,000 people are killed,[73] more than 520,000 are wounded or maimed[74] and 950,000 persons "forcibly disappeared".[75] The conflict caused an estimated total loss to the Syrian economy amounting to more than US$ 140 billion, or more than double its GDP in 2010.[76] The country's key infrastructure, industrial assets, the agricultural sector and much of its housing stock have suffered extensive devastation.

Figure 3.1: Displacement in Syria
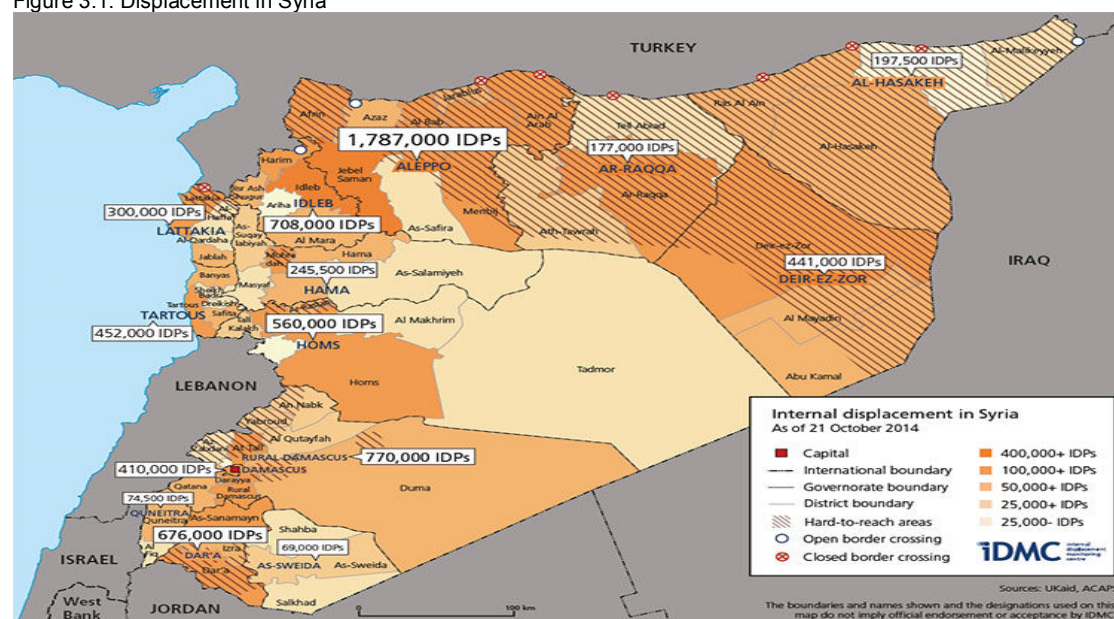
Source: IDMC (21 October 2014)

UN-OCHA estimates that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance grew from one million in June 2012 to 12.2 million. People in need include an estimated 7.6 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), half of whom have been displaced more than once.[77] More than 4.8 million people are especially in need as they reside in 287 hard to reach areas. By November 2014, an estimated 212,000 people were trapped in besieged cities, towns and villages, and were largely cut-off from the most essential supplies for months, and sometimes for nearly two years.[78]

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[73] Price, Gohdes, and Ball (August 2014). Updated by estimates from Violations Documentation Centre in Syria (VDC), http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/en/
[74] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[75] Syrian Network for Human Rights (1 January 2015).
[76] ESCWA (September 2014).
[77] UNSC (21 November 2014); UNOCHA (18 December 2014); OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[78] UNSC (21 November 2014).

Women, children and the elderly consistently stand out as being particularly vulnerable.[79] Children in Syria are exposed to numerous protection concerns, including child labour, forced recruitment into armed groups, and high levels of violence, torture and trauma. UNICEF in March 2014 estimated that at least 10,000 Syrian children have been killed;[80] an unprecedented level in the region. Syria's 440,000 Palestinians, registered with UNRWA and residing in nine camps affected by the conflict[81] (half of them are internally displaced) are also of special concern.

In response to the needs, at the end of 2012, UN-OCHA-launched SHARP, which includes several UN entities and their humanitarian partners, appealing for US$ 348 million. It subsequently revised it up several times as the crisis worsened and the needs grew.[82] The SHARP appeal for 2015, announced in December 2014, called for US$ 2.9 billion.

3.2 Key Sectors of Humanitarian Concern

In their *Syria Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment* (MSNA), UN-OCHA, REACH and the Syria Needs Assessment Project (SNAP) identified the highest needs in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene sector (**WASH**).[83] Rebel-held areas have become particularly deprived as cutting off water supplies in besieged areas is used as a weapon of war.[84] Problems were compounded by the worst drought to date in 2014. By the end of 2014, nearly 10 million people were food insecure.[85] **Health** conditions deteriorated to the point that at the end of 2014 12.2 million people had no access to health care.[86] Only 43 percent of 109 public hospitals and 51 percent of public health clinics were fully functioning by the end of September 2014.[87] **Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)** became urgent needs due to internal displacement starting from March 2013. In 2014 over 1.6 million people were in need of shelter assistance. For **Education t**he MSNA survey found that in ten out of 14 governorates nearly three million children (50 percent of Syria's school children) no longer go to school, making Syria the country with the second worst enrolment rate. Thousands of schools are destroyed, occupied by belligerents, or used as IDPs shelters.

Protection concerns increased across all sectors at an alarming rate, especially affecting children,[88] women,[89] and minority groups (Alawis, Christians, Armenians, Kurds and Palestinians).[90]

3.3. Key Humanitarian Actors

International humanitarian actors responded relatively late. The Syrian government refused access, delayed agreement, and imposed inappropriate conditions on UN agencies and some INGOs. Against this background, agreement was obtained one year into the conflict on 29 May 2012, allowing eight UN agencies and nine INGOs to operate.

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[79] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014); UN Human Rights Council (13 August 2014); Women's Media Centre (n.d.).
[80] UNICEF (March 2014). VDC recorded up to 13,000 child casualties until 25 December 2014. http://www.vdc-sy.info/index.php/en/
[81] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[82] By the end of 2013, it requested US$ 1.41 billion. In December 2013, the UN announced SHARP for 2014 and appealed for US$ 2.3 billion. Financial Tracking Service (25 December 2014).
[83] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[84] UN Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner (February 2014).
[85] UN-OCHA (December 2014).
[86] IFRC (December 2014).
[87] UNSC (21 November 2014).
[88] Price, Gohdes and Ball (August 2014).
[89] Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (2013).
[90] See: Open Doors (June 2013); UN (14 November 2014).

By the end of 2013, 16 INGOs (the largest being Danish Refugee Council, Première Urgence – Aide Médicale Internationale, OXFAM UK, and International Medical Corps),[91] 15 UN agencies[92] (WFP, UNRWA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) were operational in Syria. They partner with 107 Syrian national NGOs.[93] These include faith-based charities, small-scale social work groups, and aid organisations with close ties to the Syrian government. All Syrian NGOs and charities are subject to strict controls by the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is authorised to dismiss management.[94]

IFRC and ICRC in partnership with SARC have separate arrangements with the Syrian government. SARC is the mandatory operational partner and focal point for INGOs and the main implementing partner for UN agencies, channelling approximately 60 percent of their relief.[95] SARC branches in 12 out of Syria's 14 governorates and 75 sub-branches, including in difficult to reach areas such as Deir az-Zur and Raqqa, and in rebel-held territories on the Turkish border.

UN agencies and their partners provide humanitarian assistance in ten sectors. The lead agencies for these sector groups are the WFP (food and agriculture, logistics, and emergency telecommunication), UNICEF (education, and nutrition, and WASH), the WHO (health), UNHCR (Shelter and NFI, and protection and community services), and UNDP (early recovery and livelihoods).

From 2013 to date, SHARP issued annual requests for funding, and reported on its available budgets. These data give a broad overview of the sectors in which UN organisations and their partners have been active (see Table 3.1).

In areas controlled by non-state belligerents, UN agencies and INGOs, grassroots initiatives and community-level networks deliver humanitarian assistance.[96] Several associations of medical professionals and nascent, quasi-state structures established to substitute collapsed state institutions (such as the Local Administrative Councils and Local Relief Committees) provide food assistance, health support, and shelter and NFIs.[97] UN-OCHA estimates that from southern Turkey 140 expatriate Syrian NGOs, 35 INGOs, and 25 Turkish NGOs relief organisations operate in opposition-held areas, mostly in partnership with local Syrian organisations.[98]

Table 3.1: SHARP Budgets and Requests (in millions US$) / Sector

SHARP	2013 Budget[99]	2013 Request[100]	2014 Budget[101]	2014 Request	2015 Request

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[91] SNAP (December 2013). At the end of April 2014, Mercy Corps stopped its operations from Damascus. Action contre la Faim (ACF)-Spain received no funding for 2014. UN-OCHA (27 December 2014).
[92] Based on the size of received SHARP funding by the end of 2014, in order of appearance. Ibid.
[93] UNSC (23 July 2014).
[94] The Syrian Observer (20 May 2014).
[95] IFRC (December 2014).
[96] Abdulwahid (November 2013), The Syrian Observer (4 July 2013), Khalaf, Ramadan and Stolleis (2014), SNAP (December 2013).
[97] ACU (February 2013).
[98] UN-OCHA (June 2014).
[99] Budget figures for 2013 refer to budgets presented in 2014 SHARP.
[100] As per revised appeal on 7 June 2013.

Food and agriculture	512.2	617.9	522.7	1,119	1,218
NFI/Shelter	47.8	343.1	29.9	421.0	639,5
Health	109.5	177.3	103.8	233.4	317.9
WASH	52.6	68.4	45.7	154.8	168.9
Education	37.4	45.7	39.3	103.2	224.0
Early recovery / livelihoods	6.7	43.1	13.9	71.05	102.3
Protection and community	20.1	34.6	22.0	73.5	104.8
Nutrition	3.7	10.6	18.5	30.0	50.7
Coordination	22.08[102]	27.4	22.3	50.8	44.0
Staff safety	6.9	-	2.5	6.2	-
Logistics	10.4	14.4	4.8	12.06	9.8
ETC	0	2.0	0.9	1.6	1.3
Camp coord. & -management	-	-	-	-	12.2
Cluster not yet specified	-	-	828.6	-	-
Total	**828.4[103]**	**1,409**	**1,290**	**2,276**	**2,900**

Source: SHARP Response Plans 2013, 2014 & 2015

3.4. Formal Coordination Mechanisms

First launched in 2012, SHARP provides a formal planning, coordination and financing platform. OCHA's Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) is represented in Damascus by an Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)/Regional Coordinator (RC).[104] The Syria Humanitarian Country team (HCT) includes all UN agencies and a number of INGOs representatives. OCHA has positioned UN Regional and Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinators in Jordan and Gaziantep respectively. The Amman based Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (RHC) plays an active role in all strategic coordination bodies established within Syria and in the facilitation of cross-border assistance. The RHC is also responsible for ensuring coherence between the SHARP and RRP. The coordination mechanisms involve Syrian state agencies at all levels, and the HCT meets regularly with the Syrian Higher Relief Committee (SHRC), a state body responsible for coordinating humanitarian assistance.[105] The HCT is co-chaired by the Syrian Minister of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MoFAE). The RHC also sits on a Steering Committee chaired by the Syrian Deputy MoFAE, which provides a platform for regular meetings involving all humanitarian agencies working in Syria. In addition, the RC/HC meets on weekly basis with representatives of the MoFAE "to discuss achievements, challenges and bottlenecks in the humanitarian response."[106]

Technical and operational coordination and information exchange takes place in the ten sector groups, in which all UN agencies, the IOM, registered INGOs, Syrian ministries, the SARC and authorized local NGOs participate, depending on their field of expertise. Several inter-sectoral, technical working groups were established, for example the Shelter Sector Working Group led by the UNHCR. The sector groups and technical committees are complemented at a local level by UN humanitarian distribution hubs. All

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[101] Budget figures for 2014 SHARP refer to total resources available, which include carry-over funds from 2013. UN-OCHA (30 December 2014).

[102] For the cluster "coordination" the carry-over to 2014 of US$ 7.6 million has been deducted form the 2013 budget given in SHARP 2014.

[103] For the 2013 a total of US$ 0.9 million is deducted as this amount was carried over to 2014 to finance the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).

[104] Since August 2013 this has been Yacoub El Hillo.

[105] Slim and Trombetta (2014).

[106] Ibid.

INGOs report regularly and extensively about their activities to the Syrian MoFAE, as required by the Syrian government.

Following UNSCR 2139 (22 February 2014), which demanded safe and unhindered access for UN humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners, a 'Joint Committee' was established to discuss and coordinate ways to implement the resolution. The committee includes representatives of Syria's MoFAE, MoSA, security personnel, SARC and the UN represented by the RC/HC and/or the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator.

However, most humanitarian efforts in opposition-held territories were cut off from the UN coordination mechanisms in Damascus. The Syrian government refused to allow for assistance across borders that were no longer under its control and mostly stopped aid across frontlines; UN agencies, at least until July 2014, would not move without government consent; Syrian relief groups declined to work with the government; and INGOs found themselves caught in between or had established relations with various opposition groups including the SNC. The latter established the ACU in December 2012 with a view to coordinate assistance identify needs, and strengthen linkages between donors and relief actors in opposition-held areas.[107] Meanwhile INGOs operating from southern Turkey established the NGO Forum in early 2013, to enhance coordination and improve (security) information exchange and needs assessments.[108] After the ACU failed to become the focal point for coordinating the aid effort (see 3.7), the NGO Forum remained as the only active platform for coordination. Yet not all INGOs and Turkish NGOs operating in Syria from southern Turkey took part. The Forum also lacked access to the UN-led coordination mechanisms in Damascus.

Concerns about the lack of coordination in southern Turkey prompted UN-OCHA to map and establish relations with (I)NGOs. By the end of 2013 consultations resulted in the establishment of the Humanitarian Liaison Group (HLG) chaired by the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator.[109] Technical and operational coordination structures built on those of the NGO Forum.

In April 2014 a stakeholder meeting of 150 representatives of 95 organisations agreed to "strengthen coordination and communication amongst and between all relevant actors, including communities, national and international NGOs, [and] UN agencies to promote cohesion and accountability of humanitarian actors responding to the Syria crisis" and in July 2014, the HLG published the "Response Plan for the Syrian Humanitarian Operations from Southern Turkey".[110] A meeting in Beirut in September 2014 consolidated this structure and integrated it into the existing UN-led Syria in-country coordination structure, including the HC/RC in Damascus.[111] The latter was designed to arrive at a fully integrated and coordinated "Whole of Syria Approach".[112]

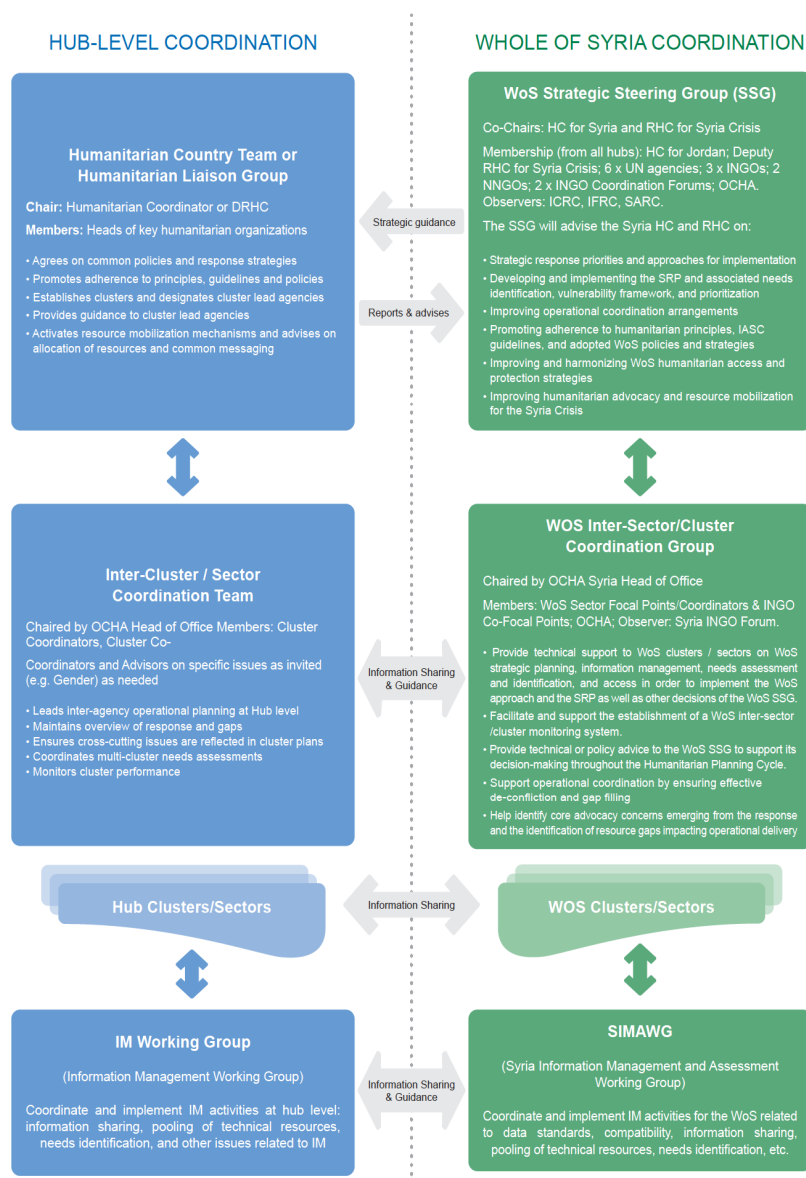**Figure 3.2:** Emerging Coordination Structure 'Whole of Syria' Approach

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[107] ACU (n.d.).
[108] Interaction and ICVA (May 2013).
[109] UN-OCHA (June 2014).
[110] Ibid.
[111] Syria Humanitarian Country Team (18 December 2014).
[112] UNSC (25 November 2014).

Humanitarian Country Team or Humanitarian Liaison Group

Chair: Humanitarian Coordinator or DRHC
Members: Heads of key humanitarian organizations

• Agrees on common policies and response strategies
• Promotes adherence to principles, guidelines and policies
• Establishes clusters and designates cluster lead agencies
• Provides guidance to cluster lead agencies
• Activates resource mobilization mechanisms and advises on allocation of resources and common messaging

WoS Strategic Steering Group (SSG)

Co-Chairs: HC for Syria and RHC for Syria Crisis

Membership (from all hubs): HC for Jordan; Deputy RHC for Syria Crisis; 6 x UN agencies; 3 x INGOs; 2 NNGOs; 2 x INGO Coordination Forums; OCHA. Observers: ICRC, IFRC, SARC.

The SSG will advise the Syria HC and RHC on:

• Strategic response priorities and approaches for implementation
• Developing and implementing the SRP and associated needs identification, vulnerability framework, and prioritization
• Improving operational coordination arrangements
• Promoting adherence to humanitarian principles, IASC guidelines, and adopted WoS policies and strategies
• Improving and harmonizing WoS humanitarian access and protection strategies
• Improving humanitarian advocacy and resource mobilization for the Syria Crisis

Strategic guidance

Reports & advises

Inter-Cluster / Sector Coordination Team

Chaired by OCHA Head of Office Members: Cluster Coordinators, Cluster Co-

Coordinators and Advisors on specific issues as invited (e.g. Gender) as needed

• Leads inter-agency operational planning at Hub level
• Maintains overview of response and gaps
• Ensures cross-cutting issues are reflected in cluster plans
• Coordinates multi-cluster needs assessments
• Monitors cluster performance

WOS Inter-Sector/Cluster Coordination Group

Chaired by OCHA Syria Head of Office

Members: WoS Sector Focal Points/Coordinators & INGO Co-Focal Points; OCHA; Observer: Syria INGO Forum.

• Provide technical support to WoS clusters / sectors on WoS strategic planning, information management, needs assessment and identification, and access in order to implement the WoS approach and the SRP as well as other decisions of the WoS SSG.
• Facilitate and support the establishment of a WoS inter-sector /cluster monitoring system.
• Provide technical or policy advice to the WoS SSG to support its decision-making throughout the Humanitarian Planning Cycle.
• Support operational coordination by ensuring effective de-confliction and gap filling
• Help identify core advocacy concerns emerging from the response and the identification of resource gaps impacting operational delivery

Information Sharing & Guidance

Hub Clusters/Sectors

Information Sharing

WOS Clusters/Sectors

IM Working Group

(Information Management Working Group)

Coordinate and implement IM activities at hub level: information sharing, pooling of technical resources, needs identification, and other issues related to IM

Information Sharing & Guidance

SIMAWG

(Syria Information Management and Assessment Working Group)

Coordinate and implement IM activities for the WoS related to data standards, compatibility, information sharing, pooling of technical resources, needs identification, etc.

Source: UN-OCHA

3.5 Results

3.5.1 SHARP: Timeliness and Responsiveness

The UN agencies and partners were relatively slow in responding to humanitarian needs as they failed to negotiate immediate access with a reluctant Syrian regime. From mid-2012 onwards modest levels of UN humanitarian assistance within Syria was enabled by a US$ 36.5 million CERF allocation for Syria.[113] Yet the first Syria appeal was only issued in December 2012; six months after OCHA estimated that 1.6 million people in Syria were in need, and five months after IFRC had launched its own first appeal.[114] It was therefore only from early 2013 onwards that UN agencies responded with significant humanitarian assistance.

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[113] UN-OCHA (31 December 2012).
[114] The IFRC launched its Syria Emergency Appeal in July 2012.

From the moment that SHARP was initiated, UN agencies and partners have struggled to respond proportionately to the rapidly worsening scope, indicated by the fact that SHARP funding requests since December 2012 more than doubled while the growth in total needs (measured in number of persons in need) in that same period more than tripled (See Figure 3.1). The 2013 appeal was only funded for 59 percent and 57 percent in 2014 (see Table 3.1). The growth in budgets was less than 16 percent whilst the humanitarian needs tripled during that same period.

3.5.2 People reached

Needs assessments are fragmented and uncoordinated and mostly focus on the needs of those who can be reached by organizations who look for sector specific needs. For instance, WHO reported that since the beginning of the crisis until September 2014 it delivered medical assistance to over 8 million Syrians with its partners.[115] IOM reported that it assisted 2.75 million persons in Syria while providing a breakdown along sectors (see Table 3.2).[116] In October 2014, the IFRC presented the most comprehensive retrospective on people it reached through SARC and other Red Cross/ Red Crescent societies, amounting to 5.5 million persons since 2012.[117]

Table 3.2: Total Number of People in Need Reached since the Start of the Syria Crisis

	People reached	Specifications
WHO	8 million	
IOM	2.75 million	Health (658,523 persons), transportation assistance (602,113), shelter (107,529), psychosocial support (241,537), livelihood assistance (4,347)
IFRC / SARC	5.5 million	2012 (553,006 persons), 2013 (3,140,135), 2014 until Aug. (1,852,591). Total beneficiaries: food 2.15 million (2012: 194,000, 2013: 794,294, 2014 until Aug. 1.16 million), hygiene kits 1.26 million (2012: 109,410, 2013: 814,740), 2014 until Aug. 338,086), winterization items 55,000 (2012: 15,000, 2013: 40,000, 2014 until Aug. ongoing). Total of 570,847 patients received treatment in IFRC-supported clinics, more than 87,000 in mobile health units, 127,973 in health points.

Source: reporting agencies as listed

One year into the first SHARP appeal in December 2012, UN-OCHA presented a chart (Table 3.3) to inform its donors from the second international pledging conference held in Kuwait in January 2013 about its achievements that year.[118] It indicated that the response was most successful in food, health and WASH. In contrast, assistance provided in especially IEHK (Interagency Emergency Health Kits), cash (in shelter and NFIs), shelter, protection and community services, agriculture, and early recovery and livelihoods fell significantly short of existing needs. On average, all sectors and sub-sectors reached 36 percent of people in need, largely due to the relatively strong performance of the food sub-sector and health treatment, vaccinations and consultations sub-sectors.

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[115] WHO (September 2014).
[116] IOM (18 November – 1 December 2014).
[117] IFRC (11 October 2014).
[118] UN-OCHA (December 2013).

Table 3.3: SHARP in 2013, Achievements
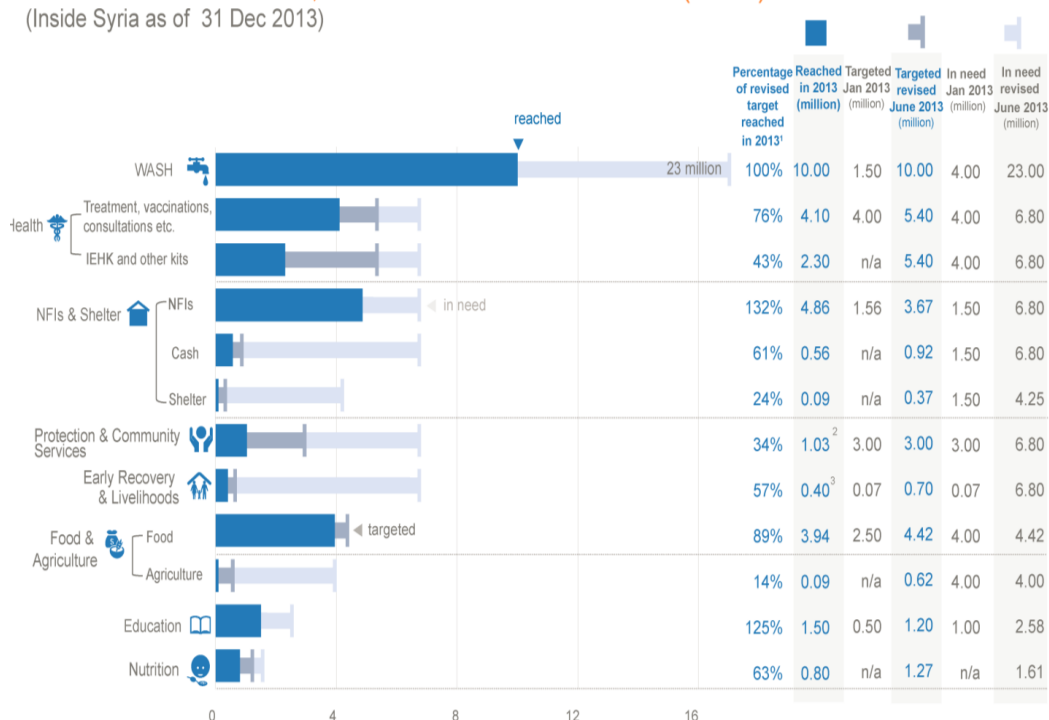
Source: UN-OCHA (December 2013)

The report specified the numbers of people reached across sectors (Table 3.4). It concluded that "[w]ithin the Syrian Arab Republic, humanitarian actors scaled up to reach a target (revised at mid-year) of at least 6.8 million people in need. They largely succeeded, and in some cases surpassed the mid-year targets as needs continued to mount."

Table 3.4: SHARP, people reached / achievements across sectors in 2013

	People reached / achievements
Healthcare	1 million children measles-mumps-rubella vaccinations 841,000 children with polio vaccinations
Food and Agriculture	89,000 people with agricultural and livestock support 536,000 Palestinian refugees with food and cash assistance
Shelter and NFI	151 collective shelters rehabilitated cash assistance to more than 564,000 people
Education	school supplies were delivered to 1.5 million children 'catch-up classes' for 310,000 children
Early recovery and livelihoods	45,000 IDP families reached in 14 governorates 5,000 local workers employed in cash-for-work scheme for solid waste removal and disposal improving living conditions for 700,00 IDPs

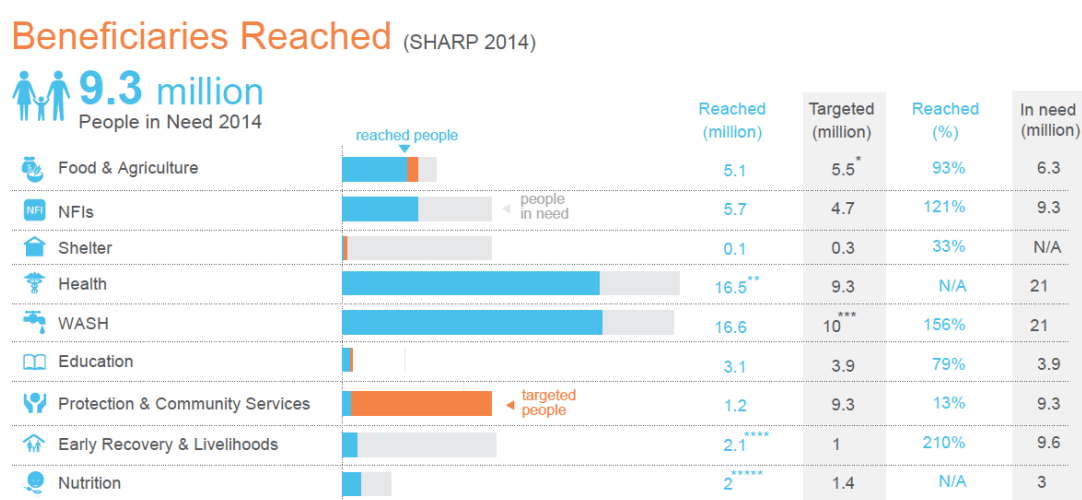Source: UN-OCHA (December 2013)

IFRC, operating outside SHARP, reported that eighty percent of the Syrian population had safe drinking water as a result of supplying Syrian water agencies with purification chemicals and its support for rehabilitation of damaged facilities, by the end of 2013.[119] SARC provided food to 3,5 million people throughout Syria except in besieged areas and

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[119] IFRC (December 2014).

distributed relief in 80 percent of "high priority areas", reaching more than 3.5 million people per month, three times as many as the year before.[120]

In March 2015 UN-OCHA reported on its activities and coverage in Syria during 2014 (Table 3.5). For this year needs were best addressed in food, health, WASH and education. Aid delivery in proportion to needs performed worst in protection and early recovery. For all sectors and sub-sectors UN-led assistance addressed on average 60 percent of needs; a marked improvement in its average coverage compared to 2013 yet likely exaggerated due to minor assistance in terms of shelter for which data are lacking but needs are probably high.

Table 3.5: SHARP in 2014, Achievements

Beneficiaries Reached (SHARP 2014)

		Reached (million)	Targeted (million)	Reached (%)	In need (million)
Food & Agriculture		5.1	5.5*	93%	6.3
NFIs		5.7	4.7	121%	9.3
Shelter		0.1	0.3	33%	N/A
Health		16.5**	9.3	N/A	21
WASH		16.6	10***	156%	21
Education		3.1	3.9	79%	3.9
Protection & Community Services		1.2	9.3	13%	9.3
Early Recovery & Livelihoods		2.1****	1	210%	9.6
Nutrition		2*****	1.4	N/A	3

Source: UN-OCHA (31 March 2015)

3.5.3 Gaps

SINA and MSNA surveys confirm that, overall, the humanitarian effort falls significantly short of meeting existing (and rising) needs.[121] SINA found that in all visited sub-districts throughout the country over 90 percent of respondents considered humanitarian assistance generally in the preceding 30 days as "insufficient" or "largely insufficient". The MSNA survey reports no improvements of the overall humanitarian response, but it does suggest that, at least in some sectors, assistance is having a modest, positive impact: "In some sectors, compared to SINA, the sectoral severity has increased, but a smaller number of persons are in need of humanitarian assistance [..]. In [other] sectors, more people need humanitarian assistance, but the severity of their needs is lesser than during the SINA [..]."[122] A closer look at sectoral level confirms this more nuanced reading but it does not remove concerns about the overall inadequateness of humanitarian assistance provided.

SINA findings suggest that opposition controlled territories are relatively under-serviced compared to regime held areas at the time of the report's release (Figure 3.4.) and that a much lower percentage of people-in-need were reached in five opposition-held governorates than the country-wide average, identified in SHARP 2014.[123] UN-led
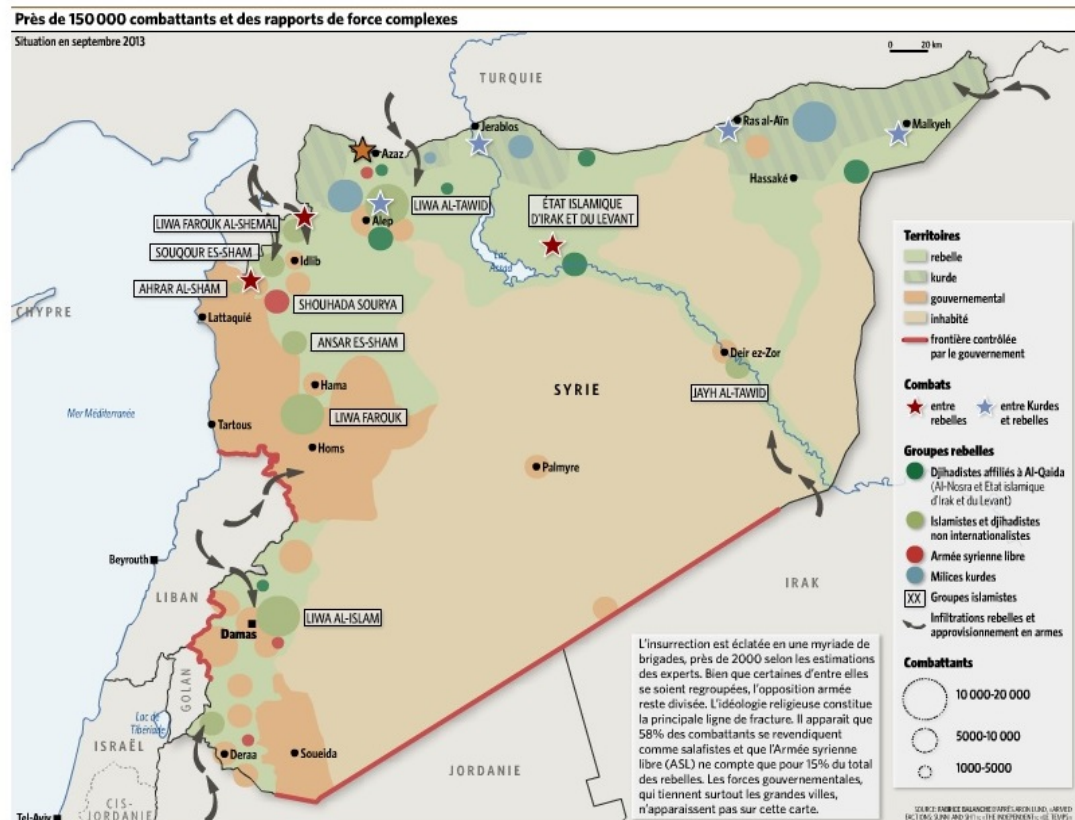
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[120] Ibid.
[121] Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria (December 2013), OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[122] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[123] These three sectors are: health, education, and food. The five governorates that were either fully or predominantly controlled by various opposition forces are: Deir az-Zur, Raqqa, Idlib, Aleppo and Hasakeh.

cross-line operations largely failed to overcome security conditions and regime restrictions, badly affecting access to opposition-held areas. SINA found that in "conflict areas where assistance is deemed sufficient, the only providers are NGOs that reportedly provide 66 percent of the response; followed by the Local Relief Committees at 17 percent, and the UN at 17 percent."[124] Given the deteriorating humanitarian situation in most opposition-held areas, UN agencies and partners faced growing criticisms.[125] On 31 January 2014, UN-OCHA acknowledged that it was unable "to reach the vast majority who are in need in the opposition-held areas," and it called for a resolution to urgently allow for cross-border assistance.[126]

Figure 3.3: Syria's frontlines October 2013

Source: Fabrice Balanche, Le Matin, 30 September 2013[127]

3.6 Cross-line and Cross-border Assistance

3.6.1 UN Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2165

Limited humanitarian access, especially to opposition-held areas became intolerable for the international community. On 2 October 2013 a non-binding UNSC Presidential Statement called on the Syrian government to facilitate "safe and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need, through the most effective ways, including across conflict lines and, where appropriate, across borders from neighbouring countries."[128] However, the Syrian government would only authorize aid to pass through the few official Turkey and Jordan border crossings under its control, refusing to authorize passage through at least eight other border crossings, most importantly Bab

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[124] Ibid.
[125] See e.g.: MSF (16 December 2013), Human Rights Watch (12 June 2013).
[126] Cited in Human Rights Watch (12 June 2013).
[127] Reproduced in: Balanche (24 October 2013).
[128] UNSC (2 October 2013).

al-Salama and Bab al-Hawa that could potentially serve millions of people in need in Idlib and Aleppo.[129] UN-OCHA, in turn, insisted that, by international law, using the border crossings required Syrian government agreement "irrespective of whose control they are under."[130] The Syrian regime also restricted or delayed cross-line assistance while it denied access to areas under siege of its forces, causing about 175,000 people to be cut off from aid.[131]

UN agencies airlifted assistance to Qamishli to reach 50,000 IDPs in early February 2014.[132] The same month the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2139, expressing "grave alarm" over "the dire situation of over 3 million people in hard-to-reach areas". It demanded that all parties, "in particular the Syrian authorities", fully implement the provisions of the UNSC Presidential Statement of October 2013. In March 2014, a multi-agency convoy entered Syria through the Nusaybin / Qamishli border crossing to reach 268,000 people in northeastern Syria. Yet overall humanitarian access remained blocked or heavily restricted, across borders and across front lines. During May and June 2014 humanitarian access worsened again whilst the number of people residing in hard-to-reach-areas rose to 4.7 million.[133] The number of people under siege, mostly by regime forces, increased to 241,000, and no additional humanitarian border crossings were authorized.[134]

On 14 July 2014 the UN Security Council to adopted Resolution 2165, authorizing UN agencies to "use routes across conflict lines" and the border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa (bordering Turkey), Al Yarubiyah (Iraq) and Al-Ramtha (Jordan), in addition to those already in use, "with notification to the Syrian authorities [..]" but bypassing the requirement of formal approval by the Syrian government. The resolution also established an independent UN monitoring mechanism to confirm the humanitarian nature of the relief consignments. Even if the Syrian government protested against what it saw as an infringement of its sovereignty, [135] ten days after the resolution was adopted the first multi-agency convoys, authorized by UNSCR 2165, passed through the border crossings of Bab al-Salam and Al-Ramtha with food, NFI, WASH, and medical supplies.[136]

3.6.2 UN-led Aid reaching opposition-held areas since UNSCR 2165

A total of 348 trucks carrying humanitarian supplies from UNHCR, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, WHO and the IOM passed the Bab al-Salam border crossing and Bab al-Hawa, during 30 days of cross-border operations under Resolution 2165.[137] According to UN-OCHA, these shipments reached 972,554 beneficiaries, mainly in Aleppo governorate (487,784 beneficiaries) and in Idlib governorate (309,890 beneficiaries).[138] In the same period, more than 380 trucks passed the border crossing of Nusaybin-Qamishli, to the east at the Turkish border, with permission of the Syrian authorities.[139] According to UN-OCHA these supplies reached 503,820 beneficiaries in Hasakeh, Qamishli district, Malakiyah, and Ras al-'Ain in separate shipments in the months March, May, October

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[129] SNAP (April 2014).
[130] OCHA Operations Director John Ging cited in UN-OCHA (29 January 2013).
[131] By March 2014, opposition forces besieged another 45,000 people. UNSC (24 March 2014).
[132] SNAP (April 2014).
[133] UNSC (20 June 2014).
[134] Ibid.
[135] Earlier, the Syrian government sent a letter to the UN Security Council, ostensibly drafted by a group of Syrian and Arab lawyers, which described any cross-border assistance not authorized by the Syrian government as "an attack on the Syrian State" and as a form of "aggression." Ja'afari (18 June 2014).
[136] UNSC (21 August 2014).
[137] UN-OCHA (12 December 2014).
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

and November 2014.[140] Dar'a was reached from the Ramtha border crossing with Jordan. Between August 2014 and January 2015, 187 trucks carrying assistance reached 376,490 beneficiaries in this area.[141]

Meanwhile, the Syrian government became less pre-occupied about cross-line assistance, possibly to counter arguments in favour of cross-border operations under UNSCR 2165. WHO reported that 70 percent of its medical assistance in July and August 2014 went to opposition-controlled areas, including Dar'a and some besieged areas like Eastern Ghouta.[142] In mid-November 2014, the IOM stated that 30 percent of its assistance went cross-line.[143] The Syrian government allowed ICRC greater cross-line access, including to the besieged Yarmuk Palestinian refugee camp since UNSCR 2165.[144] However, Syria Government cross-line humanitarian assistance authorisation was piecemeal, which negatively impacted living conditions in areas not under its control. In mid-November 2014, OCHA estimated that in the four governorates most often reached by cross-border operations (Aleppo, Idlib, Quneitra and Dar'a) two million people were still in need. [145] Only 38 percent of these received monthly food support, and only 16 percent received health support.[146] It also estimated that on average only 20 percent of people in need in hard to reach areas received monthly food assistance from while only 11 percent received health supplies.[147] As a majority of Syria's people in need (4.7 million) reside in opposition-held areas, needs are not met regularly and insufficiently, if indeed at all.[148]

3.6.3 NGO Cross-Border Assistance

Cross-border assistance from Turkey reached northern Syria from an early stage of the conflict. The Turkish Red Crescent, with Turkish government support, and a handful of Turkish relief organizations quickly established contacts with Syrian activists and medical workers inside Syria to distribute humanitarian aid.[149] Food deliveries began already in June 2011, quickly followed by modest but growing volumes of other assistance including medical supplies.[150] One of the most active Turkish NGOs was the Human Rights and Freedoms Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH), supported by donations from Muslim communities worldwide and some European NGOs including Norwegian Church Aid.[151] In February 2013, the Turkish Red Crescent, and other humanitarian supplies organized by the Turkish government, reportedly reached 45,000 beneficiaries in northern Syria.[152]

Meanwhile, Syrian relief groups, supported by Diaspora groups including the Syrian-American Medical Society (SAMS),[153] established a presence in southern Turkey. One of their most significant initiatives was the Polio Control Task Force (PCTF) a coalition of nine Syrian groups, led by SAMS It distributed, with the ACU, vaccines via a network of

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[140] Ibid.
[141] UN-OCHA (20 January 2015).
[142] WHO (September 2014).
[143] IOM (December 2014a).
[144] Telephone interview, 11 December 2014.
[145] UNSC (21 November 2014).
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] UN-OCHA (November 2014).
[149] International Crisis Group (30 April 2014).
[150] Ibid.
[151] Between March 2011 and June 2013, IHH reportedly channelled relief goods valued at nearly US$275 million into Syria. IHH (n.d.).
[152] International Crisis Group (30 April 2013).
[153] For SAMS activities in Syria see Syrian American Medical Society Foundation (n.d.).

8,000 Syrian medical workers, from January 2013[154] and reached 1.4 million children in northern and north-eastern Syria[155] by 2014.

International NGOs soon joined the cross-border efforts. Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) channelled medical supplies from Turkey to field hospitals inside Syria. It entered Syria unofficially in mid-2012 to provide emergency and surgical care.[156] When by the end of 2013 opposition groups controlled large parts of northern Syria, MSF opened new hospitals there, and distributed relief items including baby milk and flour. Save the Children in December 2012 sent NFI supplies from Southern Turkey and expanded to food aid, healthcare supplies and other assistance, reportedly reaching 715,000 people by the end of 2013.[157] Foreign NGOs had to formally register with the Turkish Interior ministry, causing some delays even if local authorities tolerated NGOs to operate informally pending Government approval and at the time of writing this report, registration is no longer an issue. By mid-2013 INGOs partnered with activists and relief groups and networks in Syria, implementing programs and managing distribution. INGOs also established the "zero-point" system in August 2012, in which Turkish NGOs administered by the Turkish Red Crescent, sent trucks to the border transferring cargo to Syrian trucks for transport and distribution in Syria.[158] By the end of 2014, Syrian, Turkish and international NGOs were sending cross-border shelter, food, health, hygiene, clothing, education, energy, transportation, and WASH assistance.[159] The volume of their aid has grown but is poorly coordinated and of limited scope. The Turkish Red Crescent reported that relief with a monthly average value of US$23 million passed through the "zero-point" system.[160] Mercy Corps reportedly sent 688 relief trucks from southern Turkey into Syria since July 2014.[161]

3.6.4 Netherlands NGOs and Cross-Border Assistance

On 5 December 2013 the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation invited Netherlands NGOs to respond to a tender for cross-border humanitarian assistance to hard-to-reach areas in Syria and for unregistered Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan.[162] The policy was intended to complement Netherlands humanitarian funding through UN channels, as long as these failed to access these areas and people.[163] The tender followed an earlier €1 million Netherlands donation to Save the Children cross-border NFI assistance program in 2013. Tender criteria included four key requirements:

1. at least one year experience in cross-border assistance into Syria;
2. conducting an appropriate needs assessment;
3. ensuring quality, and reliability of monitoring mechanisms, and;
4. taking sufficient measures to safeguard the security of aid workers.[164]

The initial tender for €4 million was increased to €6 million in order to award competitive tenders. Save the Children was awarded €1.5 million for food security,

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[154] ACU (n.d.); Sparrow (12 August 2014).
[155] Syrian American Medical Society Foundation (n.d.).
[156] MSF (7 March 2013).
[157] Save the Children (n.d.).
[158] International Crisis Group (30 April 2013).
[159] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[160] UNSC (23 July 2014). However, by the end of 2014 cross-border supplies from Turkey seem to have decreased as the Turkish Red Crescent reported US$ 9 million for October. UNSC (21 November 2014). In comparison, NGO cross-border assistance from Jordan reportedly did not exceed US$ 2 million per month. UNSC (22 May 2014).
[161] Mercy Corps information cited in Lynch (30 December 2014).
[162] Ministerie voor Buitenlandse Handel en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (5 December 2013).
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.

shelter and NFIs, providing basic supplies, bread and food vouchers for vulnerable children and their families for a period of three to four months.[165] Both Stichting Vluchteling, (€2 million, implemented by the International Rescue Committee), and World Vision (€2.5 million) proposed an assistance program targeting IDPs in northern Syria. World Vision focused on health, WASH and NFI to IDPs in Aleppo governorate.[166]

At the time of writing results were not yet reported, but a limited assessment of performance against the four key requirements of the tender was possible.

Relevant experience in cross-border assistance: Save the Children entered northern Syria to distribute relief for the first time in December 2012 (see above), partly supported with Netherlands funding for cross-border NFI assistance. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) began cross-border assistance in 2012 and reportedly reached over one million people with healthcare, women and child protection, shelter, WASH and food security, by the end of 2013.[167] IRC also previously partnered with Stichting Vluchteling in providing cross-border assistance to over 830,000 Syrian IDPs from Jordan. World Vision only explored possibilities with a fact-finding mission which was still to report its findings at the time of tender.[168]

All three NGOs carried out, or had already conducted, **appropriate needs assessments**.[169] Save the Children participated in and contributed to the SINA, released in December 2013, and conducted rapid needs assessments in local communities in collaboration with Local Relief Councils. IRC conducted rapid needs assessments among IDPs in Idlib, Aleppo, Raqqa and Deir-az-Zur Governorates. World Vision identified geographical humanitarian gaps in collaboration with the NGO Forum, and focused on Raqqa and rural Aleppo. It then conducted rapid needs assessments in these areas, followed by a more comprehensive household survey.

Establishing solid **monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** proved to be a challenge, as security prevented expatriate staff from entering the country.[170] All three tendered NGOs adopted an approach based on remote-management, flexibility and constant follow up, building relationships of trust with local partners. NGOs provided training and coaching to Syrian staff by Skype or facilitated travel into Turkey in small groups. The approach also included peer monitoring by other groups, or INGOs and their partners active in similar fields and areas. Save the Children's approach of third party monitoring by a Turkish consultancy company with networks in Syria is a relatively expensive option but increasingly used by agencies and donors. Save's output monitoring uses an on-line (web-based) monitoring tool using of QR codes.[171] IRC carries out Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) surveys among aid recipients every six months. The NGOs analysed data from a variety of sources, informing important changes to the NGOs' assistance programmes. For instance, IRC changed the content of "dignity kits" based on beneficiary feedback, and changed its suppliers of non-food items based on perceptions of poor quality amongst beneficiaries. World Vision changed the type of rice, after monitoring information showed that it absorbed excessive amounts of water in very short supply in the distribution area.

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[165] DSH (a) (n.d.).
[166] World Vision the Netherlands (n.d).
[167] IRC (n.d.).
[168] World Vision the Netherlands (n.d). However, DSH assessed World Vision's desk study and preparations since January 2013 as being sufficient for the one-year experience requirement. DSH (b) (n.d.).
[169] Information provided by the three NGOs in Antakya and Gaziantep, 13-23 October 2014.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Each of the staff carries a smart-phone, and data is uploaded using a specially designed application. Using this system, deliveries can be time-stamped and geo-tagged.

Security management was based on an explicit "'acceptance strategy,"[172] and continuous communication with locally formed civil protection groups that share an interest in ensuring that humanitarian aid reaches intended beneficiaries. Security assessments are carried out on an ongoing basis in close collaboration with local partners. Low visibility (for instance by not placing labels) allows for discrete operations and avoids causing undue attention to aid deliveries and local staff. The transfer of paperwork across multiple checkpoints and the Syrian border which would put staff at risk, prompted World Vision and Save the Children to provide local staff with scanners to allow for secured transmission via email. IRC complies with US legal requirements and USAID policies. Accordingly, each piece of sensitive equipment for use in the region (e.g. smart phones and computers) were purchased, registered and licensed for export in the U.S. To avoid undue influence on staff recruitment by armed groups[173] IRC announced publicly that recruitment decisions are taken in Turkey, and not by local staff. Initially, IRC paid all its staff on a single day from one Syrian field office. To reduce attention to this when the program expanded and staff increased to 400 staff, it spread paydays using various locations. Even if security management was largely effective and operations were able to continue under very difficult conditions, World Vision recently was forced to suspend all programs in IS-controlled areas, following the abduction of some of its core staff.

Although it still is too early to arrive at a conclusive assessment --pending the three NGOs' reporting on programme implementation-- it appears that Netherlands funding for cross-border assistance into Syria is making an important contribution in the context of growing concerns that UN-led assistance is not sufficiently reaching people in need in opposition-held or difficult-to-reach areas. The contribution is made despite these NGOs and their Syrian partners facing significant security and administrative challenges. Earlier Netherlands funding to Save the Children has helped this NGO to further gain on the ground experience, build an extensive network of contacts and trust, design innovative ways to work in an extremely challenging environment, and in these ways persuade more risk-evasive donors to come forward with additional funding for the organization's expanding operations inside Syria.

However, it is not clear why the original tender was restricted to *Netherlands* NGOs. The one-year experience criteria resulted in a very small pool of eligible NGOs. This may have caused one NGO to be awarded without meeting the requirement of one year of relevant experience, and another one to channel the funding to its U.S. partner. Furthermore, and proportionate to steep overall needs in areas insufficiently reached by UN agencies, the Dutch contribution to essential cross-border assistance remains modest.

3.7 Key Challenges

The delivery of sufficient humanitarian assistance encountered organizational, funding, security and administrative obstacles for organizations operating from Damascus and those involved in cross-border aid alike. These have had a detrimental effect on the timeliness and effectiveness of the delivery, but also on the ability to deliver according to humanitarian principles.

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[172] 'Acceptance' is a key principle of security strategies in broad use by humanitarian NGOs. It is defined as a continuous effort to "reduce or remove [..] threat by gaining widespread acceptance for one's presence and work". As such, it relies on an operational agency's ability to effectively disseminate the message that it is acting in a neutral and impartial fashion. Van Brabant (n.d.).
[173] Svoboda (April 2014).

3.7.1 Insufficient Funding

SHARP appeals were only funded at 59 percent in 2013 and at 57 percent in 2014. UN-OCHA and UN agencies reduced targets across sectors (except nutrition) by about half of estimated needs in 2013 and we observed that SHARP funds addressed 31 percent of real needs in 2013 and 60 percent in 2014.

Under-funding caused early recovery and livelihoods, shelter and agriculture to be badly affected as humanitarian (live saving) food, health and WASH sectors needs were rightly given priority. This raises serious questions about the feasibility of current intentions to focus future efforts towards "strengthening the resilience of affected communities and institutions."[174] After all, the early recovery and livelihoods, shelter and agriculture sectors are essential to any such resilience strategy as under-funded emergency needs consume much of already insufficient funding. UN-led food, health and WASH programming sectors have been chronically under-funded, causing severely diminished service delivery. For example, in March 2014, funding constraints forced the WFP to reduce its food baskets, causing beneficiaries to receive 20 percent less nutrients under the Sphere standard.[175] WFP warned that it would be forced to reduce food baskets by a further 80 percent in May that year if no additional contributions were forthcoming. WFP faced another financial crisis in September when under-funding threatened a reduction in its food deliveries for the rest of the year.[176] That same month, the IOM and UNHCR warned that they had to significantly reduce their existing assistance within Syria if no more funding was forthcoming. Even when these acute financial crises (as opposed to overall funding shortages) were eventually addressed, they caused considerable interruptions of aid delivery as, for example, ordering and shipping food supplies into Syria can take up months. Facilities for pooled funding, such as the CERF, have not been able to adequately address such funding problems as Syrian allocations compete with other major humanitarian emergencies worldwide.[177]

SHARP's financial gaps were worse than RRP under-funding. This may be explained by the fact that most donors have no appetite to indirectly come to the rescue of the Syrian government. Be this as it may, inadequate and erratic funding undermined SHARP agencies' demands to the Syrian government for better access as the latter argued that UN budgets failed to cover needs in regime-held areas or were entirely insufficient.[178]

3.7.2 Humanitarian Principles and Access

SHARP funded agencies' efforts to secure unrestricted and safe access to those most in need have been challenged in terms of their ability to uphold humanitarian principles, in particular neutrality and impartiality. From the start of the conflict the Syrian government imposed a range of administrative and political obstacles severely hampering humanitarian efforts, or it denied humanitarian access altogether. As Ben Parker, UN-OCHA's Syria country chief until February 2013, explained: "In government-controlled parts of Syria, what, where and to whom to distribute aid, and even staff recruitment, have to be negotiated and are sometimes dictated."[179] Negotiating the modalities of these administrative constraints caused delays in establishing the UN's humanitarian relief operations in Syria. Initially only eight INGOs were authorized to

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[174] Syria Humanitarian Country Team (18 December 2014).
[175] WFP (4 March 2014).
[176] UN-OCHA (17 September 2014).
[177] For 2015 the Syria crisis was allocated another US$ 30 million, or 16 percent of total CERF allocations. UN-OCHA (10 June 2015).
[178] Interview with UN official in Amman, 6 November 2014; Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic in Geneva (19 February 2014).
[179] Parker (November 2013).

work in Syria. Requests to allow for more INGOs to partner with UN agencies resulted in an increase of their number to 16; still inadequate to provide the necessary implementation capacity for what has become a massive aid effort. In April 2014 the Syrian government summoned Mercy Corps, to cease operations from Damascus if it continued to provide cross-border aid without its permission.[180] Other INGOs were registered but failed to obtain the required agreement with SARC, and could therefore not operate. Authorised UN agencies and INGOs struggled to bring in sufficient staff as their visa applications remained pending.

Some have suggested that the Syrian government's requirement for all agencies to work via and with SARC compromised their humanitarian impartiality and independence due to this organization's close ties to the government.[181] The government controls central operations by SARC as its president, Abdul Rahman Attar, maintains close relations to the regime. However, SARC negotiated considerable humanitarian space, and conducted its operations with increased professionalism.[182] Branches in most opposition-held areas are active, and often form the only permanent humanitarian presence beyond local initiatives. Many SARC volunteers died in the course of their work including at the hands of government forces (see below), giving SARC a degree of respect including in rebel-held areas.[183] More generally, it was not always easy for UN agencies and INGOs to select truly independent local partners, as for example UNHCR and IOM partnered with the Syria Trust for Development, an 'NGO' created by the regime and sponsored by the First Lady Asma al-Assad.[184]

Cross-line humanitarian assistance, when government authorization was granted, was subject to many administrative and politically motivated hurdles.[185] UN agencies had to submit weekly loading plans, which caused significant bureaucratic delays. This was changed in August 2014 to bi-weekly and monthly loading plans. Despite Syrian government promises that local governors in Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Idlib could authorize cross-line convoys, central approval by several ministers and officials continues to be required, causing significant delays. Supplies to hard-to-reach areas need to be negotiated in intermittent meetings of the joint committee established following the adoption of UNSCR 2139. Syrian authorities failed to respond to or rejected requests for the delivery of medical assistance, such as surgical supplies. Even in cases where approval was granted, regime security forces repeatedly removed medical supplies from convoys or refused to let them through. They also confiscated international aid items from convoys destined for rebel-held territory.[186] The regime at times allowed aid agencies access to besieged areas in exchange for relief to regime supporters in areas that the government is unable to access.[187]

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[180] Mercy Corps (23 May 2014).
[181] Concerns about SARC's leanings toward the regime were also expressed in Dutch Parliament. Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal (20 September 2013).
[182] Slim and Trombetta (2014); interviews with humanitarian officials, November-December 2014.
[183] Interview with UN humanitarian negotiator in Beirut, 3 November 2014. SARC's own sporadic operational updates appear to suggest that its core service delivery remains tilted in favour of regime-held areas. SARC (March 2014 and May 2014). Yet it is highly probable that SARC deliberately underreports its activities in these areas in order to avoid undue regime interference. Activities of some SARC branches in rebel-held areas even go fully unreported as they fail to be formally recognised by headquarters in Damascus. Interview with UN humanitarian officials in Amman, 19-20 May 2015.
[184] UNHCR (n.d.) (d); IOM (31 March 2014). On the Syria Trust's intimate relations with the regime and how it serves regime interests, see: Ruiz De Elvira Carrascal (2012); Donati (2013); Kawakibi (2013).
[185] UNSC (21 November 2014).
[186] UNSC (24 March 2014).
[187] Parker (November 2013).

Belligerents' instrumentalization of humanitarian aid for military or political objectives is one of the key obstacles that remains insufficiently addressed. A systematic combination of regime-inflicted deprivation with violence, including by the use of barrel bombs, culminated in what Syrian security officials and regime supporters coined the "starvation until submission campaign";[188] laying siege to, sealing off and starving densely populated areas held by rebels including districts and suburbs in Damascus, the old city of Homs, in Aleppo, and al-Hasakeh, trapping hundreds of thousands. Since UNSCR 2165 a few aid convoys have reached some of these besieged areas, including Yarmuk and Eastern Ghouta, but overall the sieges continued and humanitarian agencies have only sporadically been allowed to provide assistance here. Especially since its military advances from early 2014 onwards, ISIS also has been blocking access for relief agencies, personnel and goods into areas controlled by Kurdish forces in Aleppo and northern al-Hasakeh, and into areas controlled by rival opposition groups in Aleppo and into regime-held pockets in Deir az-Zur and northern al-Hasakeh.[189]

Active fighting also prevented or severely hampered humanitarian access. Humanitarian and medical workers persistently found themselves in the crossfire, or were deliberately targetted by both regime forces and insurgents. Since the start of the conflict to date, 69 humanitarian workers have been killed, including 17 UN staff members, 40 SARC workers, 7 Palestinian Red Crescent volunteers, and 5 INGO staff members.[190] An unknown but certainly large number of Syrian humanitarian workers lost their lives. Twenty-seven UN staff members, 24 of whom working for UNRWA, continue to be taken hostage, are detained or remain missing.[191] In 2013 and 2014 a large number of humanitarian NGO workers were also kidnapped, including by ISIS that in August 2014 seized 200 relief workers in eastern rural Aleppo.[192] ISIS executed three persons working for international humanitarian NGOs.[193] According to Physicians for Human Rights, since the start of the conflict 216 attacks were carried out against medical facilities, the bulk of which by government forces, causing the deaths of 590 medical personnel.[194] In December 2013, a British surgeon died in government detention following his arrest more than a year earlier.[195] Generally, regime forces' intense and indiscriminate use of heavy weaponry, including artillery and barrel bombs, caused severe security constraints, forcing humanitarian NGOs to scale down operations.[196] Government forces bombed relief facilities and convoys, and indiscriminately targeted traffic into opposition-held areas.[197]

Against this background, humanitarian assistance delivery required delicate manoeuvring, continuous negotiation, and engagement with all sides of the conflict. UNSCR 2165 enabled some improved access whilst the regime appears to prefer some control over cross-line assistance over unauthorized cross-border assistance. Representatives of aid organizations said that in the course of the conflict a degree of trust developed that, in their view, made both regime officials and rebel groups, including radical Islamist groups, more willing to allow humanitarian access across frontlines and into besieged areas.[198] Yet anti-terrorism legislation imposed by donors

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[188] Reuters (30 October 2013).
[189] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[190] UNSC (21 November 2014).
[191] Ibid.
[192] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[193] These were Peter Kassig (Abdul Rahman Kassig), Allan Henning and David Haines.
[194] Physicians for Human Rights (December 2014).
[195] UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (27 October 2014).
[196] OCHA, REACH and SNAP (28 October 2014).
[197] Ibid.
[198] Interviews with humanitarian workers in Beirut and Amman, November 2014; telephone interview, 11 December 2014; Farooq (28 January 2015); IRIN/HPG (December 2014).

hampered engagement with Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS as both organisations, classified 'terrorist', increasingly imposed conditions on the distribution of humanitarian aid to include their active involvement or directions toward preferred beneficiaries.[199] Attempts to encourage rebel groups to respect international humanitarian law have had very limited success and lack tangible results. ISIS' attitudes toward humanitarian assistance have been a source of growing concern. For instance, in September 2014 it raided WFP warehouses and subsequently appears to have used their contents by distributing food parcels carrying the ISIS logo.[200] Even if conditions for cross-line assistance marginally improved, they still did not produce sufficient access for humanitarian assistance to those most in need.

UN agencies operating from Damascus and NGOs engaged in cross-border work debated the extent to which belligerents' actions and demands should be left unchallenged. Many NGO workers argued that UN agencies gave in to Syrian government's conditions to the extent that they scaled down ambitions to reach opposition-held areas. Syria based UN officials argued that humanitarian agencies have insufficient political leverage on the Syrian government to lift restrictions, and they said to expect the UN Security Council to provide the political and (in the case of unauthorized cross-broder assistance) legal parameters for more favourable conditions. They also pointed out that a more assertive approach is likely to provoke the Syrian authorities, and ultimately to backfire by triggering even more draconian constraints on their operations. Finally, they asserted that cross-border assistance should not be viewed as an end in itself, and that improvements in cross-line relief efforts can be a feasible alternative. There is some merit in this as the Syrian government has repeatedly hinted at further restrictions and obstruction while it appears fully aware of its leverage in this respect.

UNSCR 2165 gave UN agencies an important tool to increased access, thereby addressing UN agencies' argument that they could only use border crossings without Syrian government authorization if receiving sufficient politial and legal backing. Yet UN agencies have not taken full advantage of the resolution, judging by the modest increase of cross-border relief supplies and cross-line operations despite growing humanitarian needs in opposition-held areas. To date, the regime summoned only one INGO to cease operations from Damascus due to its engagement in unauthorized cross-border aid, prior to the resolution. Concerns about possible government retaliation for increased involement in assistance efforts in rebel-held areas therefore appear overstated. This leads us to conclude that UN operations from Damascus and NGOs providing cross-border assistance need to improve coordination and follow a common strategy in order to improve access. This will also require donors, including the Netherlands, to further increase financial contributions, in particular to NGOs working from southern Turkey in partnership with local relief groups inside Syria.

3.7.3 Coordination Challenges

The increased regionalisation of the Syria crisis provides a highly fragmented context for humanitarian coordination. Syria and refugee hosting countries have separate coordination platforms under a rather loosely managed regional structure. Each UN agency, and many INGOs have regional offices and representation in Amman or Beirut, and each group meets in regional coordination meetings. OCHA has positioned UN Regional and Deputy RHCs in Jordan and Gaziantep respectively. The Amman-based RHC has Syria responsibilities with the Syria HC/RC, but lacks a clearly defined role in coordinating cross-border assistance or ensuring coherence between the SHARP and

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[199] Interviews with UN humanitarian officials in Amman, 19 and 20 May 2015
[200] As reported by social media, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gurFG_HOPtQ See also: BBC (3 February 2015).

RRP. These functions are also seriously challenged by regional politics and, unfortunately, the UN system's internal politics. Regional coordination for Syria and for cross border operations is further detailed below. Yet bringing coherence between the RRP and SHARP also has proved to be a challenge. Reaching agreement on the Comprehensive Regional Strategic Framework (CRSF), an attempt to bring coherence to approaches across the region, was a drawn out process. The CRSF, led by the RHC's office, was signed off by regional governments (but not Syria) and UN agencies, and was released in June 2014. The CRSF aims to promote national strategies, with prioritised delivery through national channels where possible, and principally in the area of basic service delivery (education, water supply and solid waste management).

Attempts to bring together the RRP and the SRP were frustrated with the inclusion of vulnerable host populations and when in 2014 the need arose to move towards nationally led responses with a longer-term vision. One donor representative questioned the efficiency of UNHCR led programming and its ability to manage the conflict of interest inherent to its triple functions of coordinator, implementer and donor.[201] The independent evaluation of UNHCR's response notes the tension exacerbated by the CRSF process and documented that "nearly every relevant respondent, when asked about UNHCR's coordination role, commented negatively on how UNHCR, OCHA, HCT, and HC/RC coordinated at whatever level", and a deep seated sense of frustration with the on-going 'turf battle'.[202] The evaluation notes that these tensions may be largely resolved in Jordan, but they continue to play out at the regional level and in Lebanon.

Turkey-based INGOs attributed the UN team in Damascus' reluctance to share strategically important information on time with them to a reluctance to jeopardise its relationship with the Syrian government. This hampered information sharing and trust, and it caused reluctance among INGOs to inform UN agencies about operations inside Syria for fear of this being shared with the Syrian authorities. Unwillingness to exchange information particularly hampered coordination in cross-sectoral activities in response to protection needs, as data here are especially sensitive.[203]

At the end of 2012 some donors, including the Netherlands, looked at the ACU as a potential cross-border NGOs' coordination platform. However, the ACU soon became paralyzed by political infighting, with claims of inflated salaries, mismanagement, and alleged corruption.[204] Western donors and INGOs alike felt that large funding from Arab Gulf countries had made the ACU unresponsive to their accountability standards. Some INGOs raised the more principled objection that the ACU, as an extension of the Syrian opposition in exile, could not serve as an impartial, humanitarian agency in the first place.[205] When concerns about the ACU's accountability standards appeared to be validated, the Netherlands was quick to end its financial support.

Meanwhile, the southern Turkey NGO Forum established its own cross-border coordination mechanism, but was unable to include all active organisations. Perhaps donor conditionality, including the Gulf Arab countries and also the Netherlands, to require the NGOs to actively take part in and contribute to the Forum's activities may have gone a long way to improve participation.

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[201] interview with donor representative in Beirut.
[202] Hildalgo et. al. (2014)
[203] Svoboda (April 2014).
[204] Whewell (9 January 2014).
[205] Interaction and ICVA (May 2013).

OCHA arrived in southern Turkey in early 2013, but initially failed to establish strong relationships with INGOs at a time when tensions over a perceived standard approach to coordination without much consultation or adding value to existing mechanisms. INGOs resisted OCHA coordination as they felt that UN agencies failed to meaningfully engage in cross-border assistance in the first place, and therefore did not have the credibility or the relevant expertise to coordinate this assistance.

Some UN agencies active in southern Turkey stood accused of taking decisions that failed to maximize aid effectiveness. For instance, WHO distributed polio vaccines to four INGOs involved in cross-border assistance without making these vaccines available to the Syrian-led Polio Task Force; the most active player in this field. In January 2014 the task force requested these INGOs, including Save the Children UK, to make available the polio vaccines, but Save the Children reportedly refused to release the vaccines, and although not being able to use them itself, 250,000 vaccines stored in a warehouse in Idlib were allegedly destroyed.[206] Save the Children denied the allegations.[207]

Relations between OCHA and cross-border INGOs improved slightly with the adoption of UNSCR 2139 and 2165. Some INGOs accused UN agencies of disregarding their needs assessments and local knowledge and of "dumping" assistance across the border. Lack of coordination may have caused some duplication of assistance as various sources claimed duplication of aid to some communities in Syria receiving assistance, from the INGOs and from UN-led convoys.[208] Some INGOs also feared that UN-led cross-border assistance relied on their own Syrian implementation networks, causing INGOs to be outbid and lose their valuable relationships within Syria.

In July 2014, the HLG published its detailed "Response Plan for the Syrian Humanitarian Operations from Southern Turkey."[209] At the time of our visit in October 2014, INGOs reported that relations with OCHA and UN agencies were improving. INGO representatives acknowledged OCHAs added value in some areas, specifically political analysis and information management. However, INGOs' perception remains that although coordination is more inclusive, there is significant scope for improvement especially given the additional staffing costs incurred. Tensions about real or perceived UN agencies' reluctance to send significant humanitarian assistance across the border also remains, and causes resistance among INGOs to fully participate in OCHA's coordination framework.

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[206] Sparrow (12 August 2014).
[207] Save the Children (27 August 2014).
[208] However, no clear evidence emerged to further substantiate these claims. Interviews with INGO workers in Beirut and Amman, November 2014.
[209] UN-OCHA (July 2014).

4.   Syrian Refugees and Humanitarian Assistance in Lebanon

This chapter provides an overview of humanitarian assistance and protection provided to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. It focuses on UNHCR and its partners, because the Netherlands humanitarian policy favours coordinated mechanisms. Along with chapters 3 and 5 the analysis presented here seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the *effectiveness* and *sustainability* of Netherlands government supported humanitarian aid to refugees from the war in Syria. This is intended to inform contextual, political and institutional considerations for effective Netherlands humanitarian funding channelling.

The chapter starts with an introduction of the Lebanon context, followed by a description of the humanitarian response and the main results and ongoing needs, before concluding the analysis.

4.1   Context

The Syrian refugee influx into Lebanon took place when the government and political system were torn by political conflict between the '14 March alliance', (anti-Syrian Sunni Muslim groups and likeminded Christian-Maronite political leaders), and the '8 March coalition', (pro-Syrian groups led by the Shi'ite armed group Hizbullah). Lebanon's internal instability worsened as the Syrian crisis becamse a major political issue. The 14 March alliance viewed it as an opportunity to weaken the regime in Damascus. The 8 March movement supports the Syrian regime in countering the uprising. In the summer of 2012, tensions over Syria prompted clashes in Tripoli between armed groups from the Sunni Muslim neighbourhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh and the predominantly Alawite neighbourhood of Jabal Mushin. Instability and political stalemate at a national level was further fuelled by Hizbullah's decision in early 2013 to support the Syrian regime by sending its forces to help fight the insurgents in Syria. The move flouted the Lebanese government's official policy of "dissociation" from the Syrian conflict and was strongly opposed by the 14 March alliance.[210] Resulting disagreements caused Lebanon's political process to grind to a halt while sectarian tensions peaked. In May 2013 Lebanon's Parliament postponed elections citing security concerns over the conflict in Syria.

Security conditions in Lebanon also deteriorated due to repeated clashes between Syrian rebels and Syrian government forces resulting in cross-border shelling, and exchanges of fire involving Hizbullah fighters and Syrian gunmen inside Lebanon. During the summer of 2013, major confrontations pitched the Lebanese armed forces against pro-Syrian opposition Islamist groups in the Abra neighbourhood of the southern city of Sidon, bomb attacks on two Sunni mosques in Tripoli, and several attacks and bombings by radical Islamist groups against Hizbullah and Iranian targets in southern Beirut. While sharp differences emerged over how to address or manage these security challenges, Sunni leader Tammam Salam assembled a new coalition government in February 2014, in May the term of President Michel Sleiman expired, leaving a power vacuum without agreement over his successor.

The Salam government faced a serious security challenge in the battle of Arsal in August 2014 when fighters belonging to ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra clashed with the Lebanese armed forces, killing 20 soldiers and taking at least 29 hostage. In November the Lebanese Parliament extended its own term to 2017, again citing security concerns emanating from the Syrian civil war and its impact on Lebanon. The political gridlock resulting from these developments paralyzed most of Lebanon's policymaking and

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[210] Saad al-Hariri of the 14 March alliance was also accused of providing financial assistance to Syrian armed groups. Abouzeid (18 September 2012). Mortada (30 November 2012).

public institutions and undermined the government's ability to implement an adequate response to the humanitarian consequences of the Syria refugee crisis.

The burden of the Syria crisis and the influx of refugees on its neighbour's healthcare, economic, education and social systems is well documented in the World Bank's 2013 Economic and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA).[211] It estimates an additional 170,000 Lebanese in poverty due to the Syria crisis. In its report the Bank predicts that 3.15 million of Lebanon's 4.1 million citizens would be in need of some form of financial, shelter or food support by the end of 2014. On the other hand, a UNDP report emphasized that the country in 2014 received US$ 800 million worth of international assistance, generating 1.28 percent economic growth.[212] However, wealth remains poorly distributed, causing the poorest communities hosting the bulk of Syrian refugees, especially in Akkar and the Biqa',[213] to experience considerable tensions and clashes between refugees and local residents.[214]

Figure 4.1.: UNHCR registered refugees in Lebanon
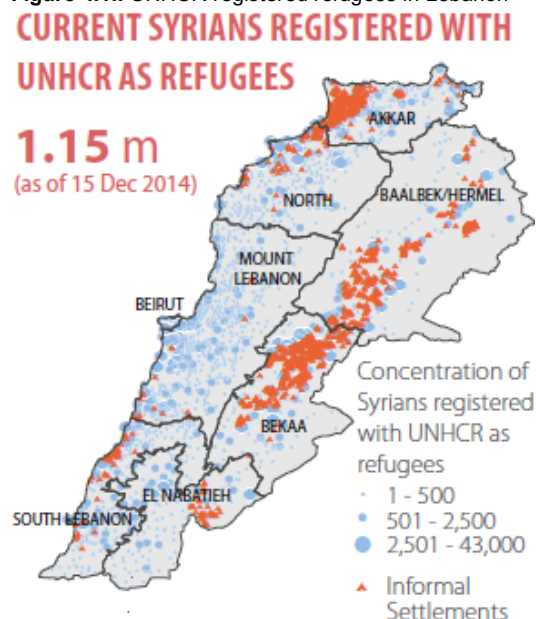
source: UNHCR (15 December 2014).

4.2 Humanitarian Response

The first Syrian refugees arrived in Lebanon in the beginning of April 2011 when 5,000 refugees sought refuge from the violence in Homs. Almost all of them stayed with host families, in Wadi Khaled, Northern Lebanon, a mere 40 kilometres from their home town. Many of them returned shortly afterwards, but as the violence in Syria increased, by the end of 2011 4,840 people had registered as refugees with UNHCR, and this number almost doubled three months later.[215] As the war continued in major population centres, refugee numbers increased steeply during 2012. By October that year, the number of refugees in Lebanon exceeded the 100,000 mark.

In 2013 and 2014, much of the fighting in Syria focussed on Aleppo's countryside, displacing a further 860,000 people into Lebanon.[216] As new front lines opened up in 2014, 440,000 additional refugees registered in Lebanon, causing their total number to

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[211] World Bank (20 September 2013).
[212] Interagency Coordination Lebanon (2014)
[213] UNHCR (September 2014).
[214] For a mapping of such clashes see: http://cskc.daleel-madani.org/cma
[215] UNHCR (16 March 2012).
[216] From mid-September 2014, 80 percent of total UNHCR projections for 2014.

reach one million in April that year. To date, with a total of 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon, at least one in every four people in the country is a refugee (including 42,000 Palestinian Refugees from Syria and 270,000 Palestinian Refugees);[217] the highest refugee per capita ratio in the world and the equivalent of 4 million refugees in the Netherlands. Nearly all refugee households who crossed into Lebanon in 2014 (90 percent) needed help with registration, shelter, food and basic material needs.[218]

UNHCR registration data demonstrate a gradual increase, accelerating in mid-2013 and growing at sustained high levels from mid-2014 until August that same year, and slightly decreasing since.[219] However, these data do not necessarily reflect actual arrivals, but also an increase in UNHCR's registration capacity. Data do not include refugees who chose not to be registered, likely to have increased in numbers since the autumn of 2014 when the Lebanese government began to impose restrictions on new entrees. The number of registered refugees in Lebanon declined from September 2014 while the violence in Syria continued and intensified.

Analysis indicates that people were displaced in waves, and arrived in numbers well above UNHCR registrations in 2011 and 2012, which show a more gradual curve. [220] This suggests that many only registered with UNHCR after they had exhausted their own resources to meet their needs. Comparing registration with actual arrival data indicates that people survived initial displacement without the help of the international system which was slowly starting up (in 2011 and early 2012). This is supported by the fact that international efforts only reached less than half of those arriving.[221]

Figure 4.2 Registered Syrian Refugees in Lebanon
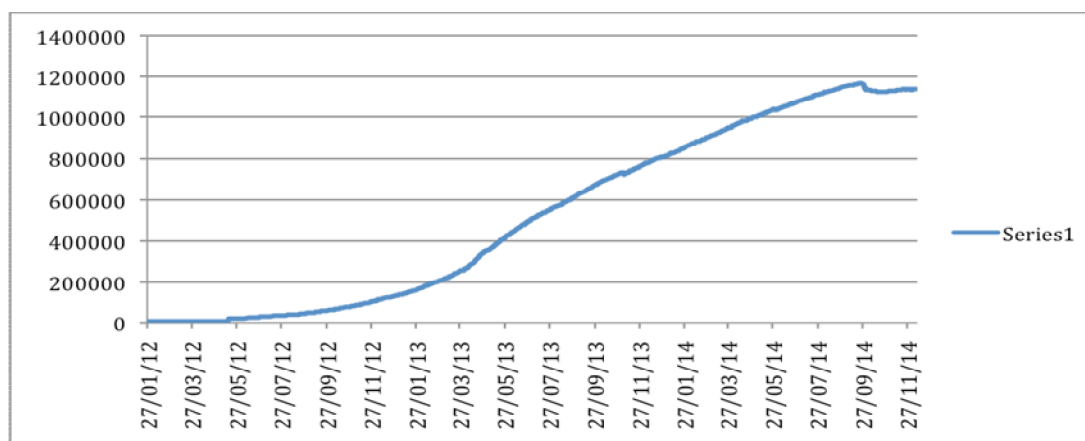
Surveys suggest that refugees are largely from (lower) middle class urban backgrounds with an average household income of US$250 per month and relying on family savings.[222] Wealthier strata often have sufficient means to survive without UNHCR registration.[223] Many refugees met their initial needs using their savings and the revenues of sold assets such as jewellery, and thanks to support from the host communities and local charities, such as mosques and churches. At this time authorities were largely allowing them to work and settle. After these resources depleted and the

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[217] LCRP (a) (n.d.).
[218] Interagency Technical Working Group (May 2014).
[219] UNHCR (16 February 2015).
[220] See e.g. DRC (11 February 2013).
[221] Ibid.
[222] Beirut Research and Innovation Centre (November 2013).
[223] many of our interlocutors indicated that some only reluctantly register with UNHCR for fear of data sharing with Syrian authorities, especially in the south (controlled by Hizbullah).

de-facto permission to work was gradually withdrawn, refugees became increasingly dependent on international assistance to meet their livelihood needs.

UNHCR led the response from June 2011 and started registration through Lebanese centres in Tripoli and Beirut and through mobile registrations in Arsal and al-Qaa, and with the opening of a centre in Ghaziyeh in south Lebanon. A handful of agencies started to distribute mainly NFIs and extended health services mainly in Akkar, the Biqa' Valley and North Lebanon later in 2011.

4.2.1 Appeals and Funding

The UN agencies launched their first appeal (RRP) late in 2012 for the period January to June 2013. In light of the rapidly evolving situation and acute funding shortages, the initial appeal for over US$ 250 million was revised and a list of priority projects was drafted. By April 2013 the Lebanon RRP component was funded at 48 percent[225] but at 90 percent of the priority list.[226] The plan was updated in June 2013 to cover ongoing needs until December 2013, when agencies expected the number of refugees to reach

Table 4.1: Overview of overall coordinated humanitarian response 2013 (expenditure) and 2014 (projected) in Lebanon

Sector	Lead	Expenditure 2013 US$ million	Budget 2014[224]	UNHCR component	Main RRP partners
Protection	MoSA	144.2	184.5	105.8	UNHCR, UNRWA, NRC, SCI
Food security	WFP	278.7	550.3	0	WFP, UNRWA, FAO, IRC
Shelter	UNHCR, MoSA	201.6	168.0	75.4	UNHCR, IOM, NRC, SCI
Basic needs (NFIs)	UNHCR, MoSA	189.4	149.1	61.2	UNHCR, DRC, IOM, SCI
WASH	UNICEF, WHO, UNDP	143.4	202.4	58.8	UNICEF, Medair, WVI
Health	UNHCR, WHO, MoPH	93.9	188.1	93.1	UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF, IMC
Livelihoods and cohesion	UNICEF, WHO, UNDP	30.6	98.0	19.6	UNDP, UNHCR, FAO, IOM, OXFAM
Education	UNHCR, UNICEF	134.3	182.7	53.7	UNHCR, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNRWA
Total		**1253**	**1723.1**	**500**	

Sources: Syria Regional Response Plan 5 – 2013 Final Report and 2014 RRP: Indicative requirement.

the 1 million mark, requiring assistance worth US$ 1.216 billion (see table 4.1).[227] This appeal was funded for 73 percent. A second appeal was launched for 2014, which was less 46 percent funded.

In 2014 RRP agencies predicted increased needs to require over US$ 1.5 billion (1.7 billion if Government costs are included). Donors from the Arab Gulf countries distrust Hizbullah's involvement in public institutions and hesitate to contribute to the RRP.[228] However, the RRP attracted less funding than the year before.

Table 4.2: RRP appeal coverage Lebanon

Period	Appeal	Priority	Funding	Covered
Jan-2013-June 2013	267,087,536	136,506,945	128,326,338	48%
June 2013-Dec 2013	1,216,189,393		881,769,237	73%
Jan 2014-Dec 2014	[229]1,515,491,900		694,311,565	46%

Sources: RRP 5 mid-year report. RRP 5 final report. RRP 6 Feb 2015 snapshot.

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[224] Final expenditures not yet reported at the time of writing.
[225] Revised Syria Regional Response Plan Funding status as of 18 April 2013.
http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=1859
[226] UNHCR (16 May 2013).
[227] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php
[228] Shibli (February 2014).
[229] The appeal was revised down from the 1.7 billion 2014 budget, during the course of the year.

Overall needs increased and the response was adjusted accordingly. Funding shortages required targeting only the most vulnerable people. WFP is the largest recipient of RRP funding as it received US$ 501.8 million (2014), compared to UNHCR's US$ 467.8 million, representing an overall RRP component of 27 percent.

The RRP is implemented in Lebanon by 77 RRP agencies,[230] mostly NGOs and UN agencies coordinated under the formal responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and managed by the Inter-Ministerial Committee established in 2012. It took considerable time for this structure to emerge. The delays left space for UNHCR to take responsibility for leading partners in ensuring protection and delivering assistance. Arrangements are in accordance with the usual division of roles and mandates in any refugee crisis in which agencies such as OCHA and its funding modalities (e.g. CERF) usually play a minor role consistent with their respective mandates: UNHCR leads in a refugee crisis and OCHA in a conflict situation (e.g. inside Syria).

4.2.2 Lebanon Government Policies

Despite not being a State party to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Protocol,[231] Lebanon is until recently regarded as having played a largely positive role with regards to protecting de facto refugees from Syria even if it does not always succeed in actively ensuring their protection. The Lebanese government stated its intention to uphold the principle of non-refoulement, and points at the large number of Syrian refugees it currently hosts. Yet Lebanon's General Security did issue several deportation orders and forced Syrians to return when they faced criminal charges.[232] The full extent to which deportations were actually carried out was not clear at the time of writing this report.

Until 5 January 2015, when visa requirements were introduced, Syrian nationals received a residency permit valid for six months, renewable free of charge for an additional six months after which renewal costs are US$200 for persons 15 years of age and older. The Government of Lebanon also waived all outstanding fees (and fines) in August 2014 for Syrians and Palestine refugees resident in Lebanon until December 2014, in order to address lapsed residency cards, including due to lack of payments. This enabled many tens of thousands to renew their residency permits.[233]

Recent measures caused a decrease of 3.6 percent of registered refugees during October 2014 and a 56 percent drop in new registrations.[234] On 31 December 2014 Lebanon's General Security Directorate announced that all Syrian arrivals now need to carry valid passports, possess minimum amounts of cash, and show proof of a hotel booking. Exceptions are made for "humanitarian cases" to be determined in coordination with UNHCR.[235] Yet the criteria for such exceptional cases remain to be defined. Nor is it clear what these requirements will mean for refugees who already are in Lebanon.[236] The government's tougher refugee policies result largely from rising popular resentment of the impact of the crisis. A May 2013 poll found that 52 percent of respondents country-wide believed that Syrian refugees were posing a threat to national security while 82 percent said that Syrian refugees were taking jobs from the Lebanese.[237]

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[230] UNHCR (7 September 2012).
[231] Because of this, Syrian refugees in official Lebanese parlance are referred to not as *laji'in* (refugees) but as *nazihin* (displaced persons).
[232] Franjieh (29 December 2014).
[233] Debriefing with Protection Unit UNHCR Beirut.
[234] IRC and NRC (November 2014).
[235] Kullab (3 January 2015).
[236] A Lebanese government spokeswoman was cited as saying that a next step would entail re-evaluating the status of refugees registered with the UNHCR.
[237] Christophersen, Liu et. al. (2013).

The fact that the government does not formally allow refugee camps means that almost all refugees settle in urban areas and host communities. As a result, increasing numbers of Lebanese citizens experience rising housing, food and education costs. The traditionally close between the Syrian and Lebanese people are becoming increasingly strained and communities' hospitality is showing signs of collapsing, leading to serious protection concerns as indicated by a steep increase in negative coping mechanisms.

As we have seen, the Lebanese government faced difficulties in arriving at a coherent and proactive set of refugee policies. Most policy efforts focussed on curbing the refugee influx and, by October 2014, at least 45 some municipalities were reported to have imposed regulations on Syrian refugees including curfews.[238] However, other municipalities allowed them to work, coordinated with INGOs and NGOs, and ensured that both refugees and local residents benefited from the assistance provided. Increasing discontent about the refugee situation among the Lebanese population served to lay bare the government's lack of action. Allegations of corruption in the office of the head of the Higher Relief Council (HRC), a government agency previously involved[239] in providing assistance to refugees and represented in the inter-ministerial committee on Syrian refugees, has further fuelled negative perceptions of the government's policies.[240] In November 2014, a poll showed that an overwhelming majority of Lebanese thought that the government and politicians generally were mishandling the refugee crisis.[241]

The Lebanese government tried several times to formulate a policy to improve the response to the refugee influx. In December 2012 the government led by Najib Miqati launched its "Response Plan to the Crisis of Displaced Syrian and Lebanese Families", seeking funds for several ministries and the Higher Relief Council.[242] Yet with the Miqati government collapsing in March 2013, the plan was not followed up. On 23 October 2014, the government adopted a 'refugee policy paper'[243] in which it described the negative impact on socio-economic conditions and security. It proved to be the forbearer of new and tough restrictions on Syrians entering Lebanon in early January 2015. In February 2015, thousands of Syrian refugees were removed by the Lebanese army clearing the area along the Syrian-Lebanese border near Zabadani, ostensibly to allow for military operations against Syrian rebels crossing the border.[244] Only very recently, the Lebanese government started to more pro-actively formulate and coordinate the humanitarian response as it became involved in World Bank and UNDP – led efforts to support host communities' capacities to cope with the refugee influx. These involve technical cooperation with government representatives, several ministries, and the government's Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR).

Some government policies did not support effective UNHCR programming. A long-term approach to livelihoods or shelter is not consistent with Government policy of discouraging the integration of refugees.[245] MoSA hesitated to support programming aimed at 'social cohesion', for fear that this may support a longer-term presence of refugees. UNHCR in partnership with UNDP supported municipalities with a US$ 1.5 million capacity building fund.

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[238] Human Rights Watch (3 October 2014). On such local curfews against Syrian refugees see also: al-Saadi (25 November 2014).

[239] In 2012, the Government announced that the Ministry of Social Affairs would lead the refugee response, leaving the HRC to manage the response to Lebanese returnees from Syria.

[240] Diab (12 November 2013). Bashir was released on bail in December 2014.

[241] Sidahmed (15 November 2014).

[242] Naharnet Newsdesk (3 December 2012).

[243] Lebanese Council of Ministers (23 October 2014).

[244] Samaha (6 February 2015).

[245] As perceived by UCAP partners.

MoSA assigned one of their staff to work closely with UNHCR and UNDP in Tripoli. The three agencies now coordinate the municipalities working group to encourage host community participation, especially in WASH and shelter programs. In Tyre, UNHCR coordinates with municipalities bilaterally, as some partners and refugees do not trust local officials, especially those with links to political and belligerent actors in Syria for fear of passing on confidential information.[246] One authority reported to have been kept "well informed, but largely uninvolved".[247] Some reports indicate that municipalities do not receive enough support from central authorities, which shows some of the systemic and long-standing problems in the political and administrative system.[248] Given municipalities' crucial role in service provision to host communities in order to cope with the refugee influx, this may account for continuing tensions and a lack of access of UNHCR to certain municipalities. At the same time, local authorities were worried that refugees are so well served that this is leading to frustration among the host communities, especially those seeking employment or access to (secondary) health care. UNHCR responded with US$ 25.5 million for 278 Community Support and over US$ 30 million of Institutional Support to Government Programmes. Most of these funds go to central authorities as UNHCR assessed very few local authorities to have the required capacity and systems in place (planning, financial management etc.) to effectively implement projects.[249]

4.2.3 UNHCR

UNHCR's core business can be summarised as providing refugees with coordinated assistance and protection. It has been present in Lebanon for 47 years with both country and regional support activities (registration, refugee and asylum seekers status determination of refugees and resettlement) to other country offices in the Middle East and North Africa. It has six offices in Lebanon and employs 580 staff, 133 of whom are international.[250]

Registration aside, the UNHCR implements almost its entire budget through partners, who also receive direct funding from back donors, through RRP or otherwise. Even if UNHCR is not the most prolific RRP recipient, its overall coordination and protection mandate makes it strategically, and in policy terms, the dominant agency. It plays a key role in quality control in all programming aspects: from needs assessments, to implementation arrangements, monitoring, information management and it is overall responsible for the success of the international response.[251]

UNHCR decentralized its operational coordination to the point of delivery culminating in expanded capacities and responsibilities in four sub offices (Tyre, Tripoli, Mount Lebanon and Zahle), in 2013. In doing so, it established coordination functions without interfering with operational resources. However, it also created new positions that added to the coordination complexity and costs.

4.2.4 Coordination

With large numbers of refugees came a considerable influx of aid agencies. UNHCR clarified its role within broader humanitarian coordination systems. In accordance with

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[246] Various partner interviews.

[247] Interview with the vice mayor of Tyre.

[248] Central government transfers to municipalities in Lebanon comprise only 0.6 percent in Lebanon compared to 3 percent in developing countries generally. Atallah, Bashiri, and Harb (April 2014).

[249] UNHCR (2014).
As one study observed, almost 400 municipalities do not have one single employee and another 400 suffer from very weak administration. Atallah (March 2012). http://www.lcps-lebanon.org/featuredArticle.php?id=6

[250] http://www.unhcr.org/ga14/index.xml

[251] Section 4.3.2 provides a more detailed description.

the Transformative Agenda[252] item of providing "empowered leadership", a Country Humanitarian Coordinator was deployed in Lebanon and a Regional Coordinator was to oversee the overall regional programme. Reports indicate that at the regional level, the main actors reached consensus easily that UNHCR should lead the coordination of the overall response.[253] At the same time UNHCR actively participated in the HCT and the UN Country Team, chaired by the HC/RC. UNHCR reportedly kept the HCT informed about the refugee operation on a regular basis and coordinated with OCHA and the HC. Some participants in the Lebanon coordination architecture attribute great importance to HCT's role, pointing out that it adds a layer of accountability to the response.[254]

Coordination is UNHCR core business, but operationally, registration is among its strategic responsibilities. Registration is the basis for eligibility for UNHCR coordinated assistance and is essential for the legal and material aspects of protection.[255] UNHCR manages the sector working group system in which it defines its role as "facilitating collective decision-making."[256] It enhances its role by closely monitoring partner implementation, organisational risk management, and quality assurance strategies. Programmes are implemented largely by partners, mostly (I)NGOs and other UN agencies. The Independent UNHCR evaluation found that "there was a general consensus on the fact that UNHCR had the lead role in the coordination of the overall response in Lebanon"[257] and had the mandate, capacity, and resources to lead.

Coordination platforms include interagency coordination in Beirut and the sub-offices, and comprise 12 sector working groups and a number of specific task forces, and interagency structures. The independent UNHCR evaluation found that in Lebanon "the current coordination model is largely effective" and "in support [of] knowledge sharing and decision-making."[258] Our partner interviews contradict this and most partners we spoke to found that coordination platforms were seen as "useful" but "output driven,"[259] offering only limited opportunities for learning and suggesting that the agenda needs to be complemented with impact analysis focussing on what works well and what does not. The lack of quality data and a lack of partner's analysis capacities compromised the reliability of needs assessments and beneficiary targeting. Our findings suggest that partners highly value UNHCR's approach to coordination (3.5 out of 5). The results of our interviews compare favourably with those of the Coordination Feedback Survey of 104 respondents of 22 agencies, conducted by the Lebanon Humanitarian Inter-Agency Forum (LHIF) in May 2014,[260] which rated UNHCRs coordination performance at 2.3 out of 5. External observers also speak of the heaviness of the structure and lack of technical coordination (e.g. on child protection) between UNICEF and UNHCR, leaving partners caught in the middle of disputes over indicators and reporting frameworks. However, at interagency level the view is that the system is overdeveloped with too many layers, participants, duplicate leads etc. taking too many resources, especially since decentralization duplicated the management of these mechanisms in six regions in a relatively small country.[261]

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[252] InterAction and ICVA (May 2013).
[253] OCHA had only eight staff in Lebanon at the time.
[254] Inter agency stakeholder interviews in Beirut.
[255] The Independent UNHCR evaluation (section 7.7.2) cites "building trust in UNHCR's impartiality, information management opportunities and the protection value" as three main aspects of importance.
[256] Interview with Country Representative UNHCR Beirut.
[257] Ibid.
[258] Ibid
[259] UNHCR partner interviews in Beirut, Tyre and Tripoli.
[260] "LHIF Program/Field Staff Feedback on inter-agency Coordination in Lebanon," (May 2014).
[261] UNHCR-PDES (July 2013).

UNHCR's decision to decentralize operational coordination to sub-offices resulted from an identified need to be closer to implementation to support operations of a relatively large number of partners[262]. In the eyes of many observers centralization encouraged an already existing relatively cumbersome and expensive set of coordination structures that functioned primarily for information sharing. However, partners feel that the decision was made without much consultation with partners, who consequently have not aligned their decision-making model with that of the UNHCR. For instance, UNICEF remains centralized, which created asymmetrical dynamics for NGOs who implement for both UN agencies. Decentralization also reportedly caused delays and undermined the timeliness of assistance.[263] The independent evaluation speaks of decentralisation as both a "constraint and an enabler" and notes an "absence of a harmonised approach between different decentralised units and vis-à-vis implementing partners."[264]

Local NGOs and CBOs, especially faith-based NGOs, often funded by Gulf states, do not fully participate in the system as they lack the networks and bilateral contacts, face language barriers and apply different humanitarian standards, despite UNHCR efforts to reach out to them.

Interviews with partners and both independent and internal evaluations confirm that skilled sector coordinators, the separation of coordination from UNHCR operational management and improved data collection and analysis, information management, and a more participatory RRP strengthened coordination in 2013 have all improved the performance of the overall coordination framework.[265]

4.2.5 UNHCR Partnerships

UNHCR's global policy is to provide assistance and protection in partnership with governments, NGOs and the private sector. UNHCR partnership and other forms of humanitarian coordination are essentially voluntary commitments and can only be enforced by local authorities and encouraged by donor conditionality.

UNHCR describes its overall mission as providing "operational support and coordination to a wide range of private and public actors who work in the interest of refugees" even if its first concern is with the international protection of refugees.[266] For this reason we focus this part of the study on the quality of the partnerships.[267]

Partners can be government agencies, INGOs, local NGOs, CBOs, the private sector and also other UN agencies. UNHCR distinguished between two types of partners:

1) Implementing partners are those who operate with UNHCR funding, although not necessarily exclusively;
2) Operational partners who work within and report to UNHCR's coordination mechanisms but are not funded by UNHCR.

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[262] UNHCR briefings in Tyre.
[263] Hidalgo et. al. (3 November 2014), *Beyond Humanitarian Assistance ? UNHCR and the Response to Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, January 2013 – April 2014.*
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid. and UNHCR-PDES (July 2013).
[266] http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c296.html
[267] Partners are both Implementing Partners (funded by UNHCR) and Operating Partners (not funded by UNHCR).

UNHCR describes the added value of its partnership as "presence on the ground" offering "local expertise and the capability to become operational on short notice in emergency situations."[268]

4.2.6 Partner selection and project approval

Partner selection starts each year with a call for proposals, providing UNHCR with an overview of all plans by agencies interested in UNHCR funding. Those not interested to apply or non-eligible can still be regarded as partners if included in UNHCR coordinated frameworks through the RRP or bilateral arrangements.

The majority of partners are (local affiliates of) international NGOs. For 2015, UNHCR has selected 11 national partners and 19 international. A smaller number are Lebanese NGOs, such as the Amel Association. Some of these are independent technical agencies and educational institutions that deliver training programmes or technical services. Others are development partners of the international NGOs who have acquired independent funding from UNHCR. UNHCR also partners with eight other UN agencies. Only one Lebanese government institution (MoSA) is listed among the implementing partners.

We spoke to 14 UNHCR partners[269] (nine in Tyre and five in Tripoli) about their activities and partnership with UNHCR. We selected partners from three sectors which the Netherlands' MoFA deemed of particular interest: protection, shelter and unconditional cash programming. An overview of all scores is provided in Appendix 2.

Netherlands NGOs
One of only two Netherlands NGOs operational[270] in Lebanon is Dorcas, which implements one of the four tenders for the implementation of the 'Amendment Voordewind' working with non-registered refugees in al-Metn, Mount Lebanon (see Appendix 4). The rationale of the fund was that bypassing the policy to channel funding through coordination platforms (in this case UNHCR) was justifiable if UNHCR did not reach certain people of concern. In other words, it was assumed that UNHCR was not including unregistered refugees in its programmes. However, UNHCR coordinates several partners (including Dorcas) who work with non-registered refugees in Lebanon,[271] making the decision to fund Dorcas to appear less pertinent.

The other operational Netherlands NGO is War Child Holland (WCH). The latter assists Syrian children through the provision of remedial classes, psychosocial support and recreational activities in the North, in Beirut and in Mount Lebanon.[272] The Netherlands MoFA supports WCH in two ways: by way of a grant from the Netherlands Syria Relief Fund (direct NGO funding) while another part of War Child's programme is funded by UNHCR, making it the only Netherlands based UNHCR implementing partner.

OXFAM-Novib is integrated in a joint OXFAM International operation,[273] led by OXFAM GB, whose focus is on cash for rent and protection (gender). Others, such as Cordaid (Caritas, mainly in health and child protection), Netherlands Red Cross (IFRC/Lebanon Red Cross, shelter and health), programme through their international affiliate networks. Only few other Netherlands NGOs, such as MSF Operational Centre Amsterdam (MSF-OCA) have a programming track record in the Middle East (Jordan).

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[268] http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c2f6.html
[269] see Appendix 3.
[270] The term operational here is used to indicate that staff, resources and inputs are directly managed from the Netherlands.
[271] UNHCR (25 April 2014).
[272] RRP partner profiles on http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/partnerlist.php
[273] Interview with Oxfam country managers in Beirut.

Other actors

Humanitarian actors outside the UNHCR-led framework include local Community Based Organizations (CBOs), ICRC, MSF and private actors. Major CBOs in Lebanon are al-Saha al-Islamiya (Islamic Health, related to Hizbullah), Makassed Philanthropic Islamic Association and Dar al-Fatwa (Sunni Endowment). CBOs are strongly embedded in Lebanese communities where civil society tends to be organised along sectarian lines. The international organizations engage with them on a local level. During security deteriorations (in Arsal, Tripoli, Sidon, and the Palestinian camps) some CBOs maintained access when many international actors evacuated or continued operations with local staff.[274] Commonly, local CBOs make up 75 percent of the UNHCR's NGO partnerships, but this percentage is much lower in Lebanon, presumably because of the partisan nature of the CBOs or maintain vulnerability criteria, standards and principles different from UNHCR's.[275]

ICRC and MSF are important humanitarian organizations with sizeable programmes, but they choose to remain outside UNHCRs coordination framework. MSF-Operational Centre Geneva (OCG) indicated that they are willing to formally participate at interagency level, but at the time of information gathering they were still waiting for an invitation. Both agencies agree that UNHCR engages regularly and bilaterally with them to ensure operational continuity (referrals and follow up) and to avoid duplication.[276]

4.2.7 Needs Assessments

The RRP is a needs-based appeal, but unlike for Syria there is no consolidated overall need assessment, as these are the responsibility of each individual partner separately for their project proposals. UNHCR cross-checks with their own contextual analysis and other reports. All needs assessments are stored on the UNHCR web portal.[277]

UNCHR and partners conduct an annual overall vulnerability assessment, feeding data into the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyr), providing quantified sector and region information on demographic profiles, assets, income, expenditure of families, barriers in accessing services such as health and education, coping strategies, and debts. In addition to VASyr regular (cross) sector needs assessments are carried out. VASyr data collection started in 2013, followed up in 2014, and planned for in 2015.

Only when under-funding created the need for further targeting, which became apparent in early 2013, REACH[278] was deployed to undertake a multi-sector needs vulnerability assessment in Lebanon. In order to come to a more integrated approach, the Multi Sector Needs Assessment platform was established in February 2014 by an inter-agency technical working group, consisting of NGOs, MoSA, IOM, and UN agencies. The purpose is to identify priority needs, within and across sectors, and identify gaps. The Multi Sector Needs Assessment initiative assessed 86 needs assessments in May 2014 and found the following gaps:[279]

- limited contextualization and triangulation of primary data through secondary data analysis;

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[274] E.g Amel Association in Arsal.

[275] UNHCR briefing in Tyre and debriefing in Beirut.

[276] UNHCR briefings, interviews with ICRC, MSF OCG Head of Mission.

[277] The earliest assessment in this repository is the DRC shelter needs assessment from July 2011. The most recent one is the OCHA / REACH needs assessment of Lebanese host communities in October 2014.

[278] REACH is a joint initiative of two international NGOs, ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH was created in 2010 to facilitate the development of information tools and products in support of and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

[279] Interagency Technical Working Group (May 2014).

- measurement units not sufficiently harmonized to allow for comparability;
- limited data disaggregated by gender and age;
- the situation is not tracked over time;
- lack of harmonized language and sector-specific terminology - resulting in inability to make comparisons.

Partners face a number of challenges when assessing the needs of refugees including geographic dispersion and difficulties with locating them in remote mountainous areas or privately rented accommodation in urban areas. People are also quite mobile[280] and their vulnerability can change over time.

4.2.8 Monitoring

Activity monitoring is a continuous process conducted by UNHCR field staff, sector specialists and project control staff, often jointly with partners and with other stakeholders, including government and donors. During the emergency stage of mass arrivals and the need for life saving activities monitoring rightly focused on outputs (implementation and distribution). It entailed reviewing implementing partner performance reports; reviewing and analysing secondary data (Activity Info inputs); on-site field visits and regular meetings at project sites. Performance is reviewed against targets for sectors, geographic areas and partners on a monthly basis. Other monitoring activities valued by partners were UNHCR field visits and real time feedback. UNHCR pro-actively monitors implementation on the ground, often by accompanying partner staff during their activities.

UNHCR and partner field staff meet with refugees to complement assessments in annual structured dialogues. In 2013, more than 170 focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were held with around 2,000 vulnerable refugee men and women of all ages and backgrounds. Groups were identified based on a mapping or profiling of the registered population, as well as gaps in information relating to a certain group.

UNHCR has a network of over 300 Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs), some of whom specialise in areas such as health, legal issues, etc, and regularly report back to UNHCR and partners on needs they see and suggested responses. UNHCR project control and programme officers verify compliance with the project agreement. A review of partners' internal systems and controls, as well as financial recording, documentation, and reporting is integrated in an overview of partner capacity as the basis for negotiating partnerships and agreements. UNHCR also keeps track of expenditures on a monthly basis.

UNHCR reports across all sectors on a monthly basis, outlining, needs, achievements, gaps and constraints. The reports are aligned with the Operations Plan. In addition, UNHCR provides a comprehensive mid-year review which is reviewed by HQ. Mid-year implementation and expenditure rates reviews allow for adjusting targets, budgets, and implementation plans, feeding into the mid-year RRP Lebanon review. During the review the unspent balance with each partner is analysed and agreements may be adjusted to extend the agreement to ensure that unspent balances are used, or agreements with additional allocations of resources are made with partners who have implemented according to plan. At the end of the year UNHCR prepares a final report on its activities, achievements, gaps, constraints, and lessons learned, which feed into the detailed planning exercise for the following year.

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[280] UNHCR briefing in Tyre.

Although some partners reported UNHCR's approach as "unnecessarily close," overall they strongly appreciate the implementation of monitoring systems. Critical feedback focussed predominantly on the functionalities of online information management tools.[281] The two systems most frequently quoted as potentially useful for referral and crosschecking information were Activity Info and RAIS (Refugee Assistance Information System). Activity Info is the basis for the WWW.[282] However, information is at agency level and is not useable for individual or household level analysis. This is the function of the RAIS refugee database which reportedly contributed to limiting Unconditional Cash Programme (UCAP) duplication and to verifying the status of new arrivals. However, some partners are reluctant to share data on RAIS because of fear of breach of confidentiality. Some partners found that uncorrected entry errors reduced confidence in the accuracy of the information. Others report a lack of understanding of how systems relate to each other. UNHRC claims that RAIS is continually being upgraded to improve the functionality and that most partners do use it to record assistance delivered. Partners consistently report to lack knowledge of outcomes or impact and the capacity or resources for robust analysis. This may explain why monitoring systems are seen as useful for external reporting but not functioning well as project management tools.

4.2.9 Predictability and Timeliness

UNHCR Lebanon partners perceive predictability and timely disbursement of funding to be the most problematic of all partnership aspects. UNHCR reviews project activity funding every three months against its actual credit status and every six monthly for project related staff positions. When credit is low due to late back donor payments, cash flows can become problematic. Rather than managing these risks internally, (e.g. with non-earmarked funding) UNHCR chooses to transfer them to the earmarked country programmes in Lebanon, who in turn have no other choice than to pass on the problem to the field offices and partners. UNHCR auditors confirm that this "had severe implications" on partners planning capabilities including on staffing and procurement.[283] Having said this, this strategy also ensured a level of services that would not be achieved with a more conservative approach.

Partners indicate that untimely and unpredictable funding seriously challenged their ability to plan and retain and motivate key staff, and that this has in some cases had negative consequences for activity implementation. Partners could only contract staff for 6 months and plan operations for three months. UNHCR assumed that this would allow partners to retain staff. However, partners report that if staff cannot implement activities, they tend to leave as they perceive inaction as a threat to their job security. This causes relatively high staff turn over, loss of training inputs and delays in implementation and wanting quality. The fact that partners could only enter into three monthly procurement agreements means that bulk discounts were not available, leading to significant cost increases and inefficiencies.

One partner reported that delays in funds disbursement had a detrimental effect on the protection of medium to low at-risk refugees.[284] Having been forced to suspend activities due to a sudden cash flow crisis induced by the late remittance of protection cash activities, this partner was forced to prioritise the most at risk group at the expense

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[281] Interestingly, we found relatively high correlations between needs assessment and monitoring, even if the systems are not connected, perhaps indicating that issues are linked to a broader information management agenda.

[282] Who is doing What Where.

[283] Email exchange with member of the UNHCR Audit Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOSU-227, UNON, mission in Lebanon.

[284] By prioritising the most vulnerable, these were relatively less affected.

of other beneficiaries already included in its project. This left a number of vulnerable people without protection for up to two months.

These observations are supported by a relatively strong connection between the extent to which partners valued the predictability and timeliness of UNHCR fund disbursement and the extent to which they valued results: in other words the higher they valued predictability, they higher they value programme results and vice versa. Poor predictability affected both efficiency and effectiveness of some partner operations. The independent UNHCR evaluation finds that "this leads UNHCR to prioritise the type of activities it can finance in time, as opposed to following a needs-based approach and spending funds on what the agency wants to do."[285]

UNHCR is aware of these problems and risks. In order to improve the situation it now guarantees an operating level for the 12 months of 2015 based on what is actually available in its Geneva bank accounts at the beginning of the year. Although this will provide more predictability and hence improve planning, it will also mean that partners will face significant reductions in their budgets. UNHCR auditors have not seen this way of managing financial risks in other operations and we also did not come across these problems in Jordan. Henceforth, this particular risk management strategy seems and its consequences seem a particular feature of UNHCR in Lebanon, which it says resulted from far more frequent budget increases than in other operations.

4.3   Results

This section analyses the effectiveness of the UNHCR's coordinated response to protection, shelter and livelihoods needs of the refugees. At the time of writing this report, final data for 2014 are not yet available as the RRP6 final Lebanon review is expected to be available only in May 2015.

4.3.1 Protection

The collective response from the RRP Lebanon partners resulted in an impressive set of outputs in 2013 and 2014. UNHCR and partners achieved key output targets in Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and Child Protection. Between January and December 2014, more than 4,407 children received individual assistance, including psycho-social support, emergency care arrangements, and reunification. Additionally, more than 1,300 social workers and case workers, including government staff, benefited from training and coaching to improve the quality of services.[286] UNHRC identified an supported 5,678 persons at risk from SGBV and sensitized almost 12,000 people on the subject.[287]

However, despite these results, needs remain high, particularly as a result of severe increases in negative coping due to increasing numbers of refugees now living in extreme poverty as well as increased host community hostility. Although there are no reliable data on SGBV and disrespecting the rights of children[288] focus group discussions it is believed that the problems are extremely widespread due to inadequate government policies and funding and economic, social and political conditions in Lebanon[289].

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[285] Hidalgo et. al. (3 November 2014).
[286] In the same period, over 335,651 children, including adolescents and youth, and over 126,406 caregivers benefited from other psychosocial support activities. During the 2013/14 school year, 229,000 children out of the 619,100 in need received support in accessing education. UNHCR (n.d. (a).
[287] UNHCR Lebanon (August 2014).
[288] Gilbert (18 July 2014).
[289] Anani (September 2013).

4.3.2 Shelter

Refugees are found in many different types of accommodation of varying quality. These include rented rooms, abandoned and refurbished buildings, collective centres and informal settlements, scattered across the country often on private land leased to refugees, often against exorbitant costs and at significant risks of eviction.[290]

RRP data show that outputs fell significantly behind targets in 2014 which may account for the fact why housing remains one of the most urgent issues for refugees. It is estimated that about 40 percent of refugees now live in substandard shelters,[291] including in 350 informal tented settlements. By August 2014, 41 percent of Syrian refugees were in substandard shelter, mainly in informal settlements and garages, worksites or unfinished buildings.[292] The government's proactive security measures introduced in the second half of 2014 have focused on sensitive areas including informal settlements and collective shelters. Approximately 10,000 de facto refugees have been evicted as a result.[293] Poor living conditions increase women's and girls' risks to sexual and gender based violence due to lack of privacy, and overcrowding. Female headed households may be at greater risk of sexual exploitation when they are unable to meet rental payments. Survival sex in households that cannot pay for their rents is an increasingly reported problem.

Rental market dynamics increased evictions, indebtedness and resulting economic and psychosocial distress. The integrated nature of these issues provides opportunities to mainstream protection in shelter programming.[294] This would mean putting the concept of protection vulnerability at the heart of the shelter strategy, which would benefit the elderly, people with special needs, female-headed households, and single mothers.

4.3.3 Cash

Vulnerable refugees require income in addition to assistance and protection to meet their basic needs for survival and they mostly seek this by way of informal employment opportunities which is scarce and illegal. General employment reached approximately 20 per cent by the end of 2014,[295], but for refugees employment is increasingly difficult to find and women and young people are disproportionally affected with nearly 4 out of 5 Syrian displaced women not having access to work related income.[296]

An estimated 70 percent of the total registered Syrian refugee population requires assistance to meet basic needs, and of this population, an estimated 29 per cent is deemed severely vulnerable.[297] NFI sector partners have successfully met most of the basic needs of vulnerable refugee populations. However, the sector faces funding shortages, exacerbated by a reduction of ECHOs budget by 50 percent,[298] and needs are ongoing as a result. The introduction of e-vouchers[299] was encouraged by the fact that Syrian refugees are scattered over 1,700 locations in Lebanon making in-kind or paper voucher distribution verification and post-distribution monitoring inefficient. According to the Independent UNHCR Evaluation refugees largely welcomed the switch from in-

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[290] Hidalgo et. al. (3 November 2014).
[291] UNHCR Lebanon (December 2014).
[292] UN-HABITAT and UNHCR (August 2014).
[293] LCRP (b) (n.d.).
[294] Hidalgo et. al. (3 November 2014).
[295] LCRP (b) (n.d.).
[296] Ibid.
[297] LCRP (c) (n.d.).
[298] UNHCR, MSNA Team (n.d.).
[299] 'e-vouchers' usually refers to the WFP assistance, where the voucher can be used at one of a network of participating shops for the refugees to purchase food.

kind assistance to cash assistance providing them with the dignity associated with the freedom of choice to make their own budgetary decisions and priorities.[300]

The UNHCR cash programme is unconditional cash, where refugees have an ATM card and pin number to withdraw cash. The 'One Card' pilot, where the same card is used to load WFP voucher value and withdraw cash from the ATM will start in June 2015. The cash programme was an important and appropriate programme, allowing for people to set their own priorities and make their own choices about items and quality. Yet even if cash for the purchase of NFIs was conceived to extend more flexibility, Dorcas (supported with direct Netherlands funding) continued to provide in-kind items in Mount Lebanon.[301]

4.3.4 Other Sectors

Food and Health are two of the most critical needs in any humanitarian situation and RRP partners successfully averted the outbreak of communicable diseases or malnutrition. In 2013 the agencies collectively distributed mostly according to targets when adjusted for under-funding.[302] Partners confirm that this represents a very good overall result against planned targets, signifying an endorsement of UNHCR's facilitation in terms of coordination, funding and advocacy allowing its partners to reach refugees with assistance and protection required for their immediate needs. In 2014, the RRP continued with the same operational framework, generating similar levels of outputs.

4.3.5 Coverage

The Independent UNHCR evaluation found that "current interventions are insufficient to respond to increased refugee numbers,"[303] and it identified lacking partner capacities particularly in the shelter and WASH sectors and in certain geographic areas (e.g. Arsal).

At the beginning of the crisis 100 percent of the registered refugees received hygiene kits and food vouchers. Targeting was managed by a task force and introduced in the second half of 2013 when numbers increased rapidly and RRP funding did not match. Targeting was informed by preliminary VaSyr-results which showed that 70 percent of the refugees were in need of ongoing basic needs assistance, now inclusive of winterization assistance.[304]The targeting task force identified individual households, reducing the number of beneficiaries.

Table 4.3: Targeting the most vulnerable: classification (percentages of overall in Lebanon registered refugee households and individuals in 2014):

	VULNERABILITY CLASSIFICATION (corrected percentages)					
	Low	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Mod-severe	Total Indiv. Mod-Severe + Vuln. Cases Low-mild
Households	19	28	45	8	53	
Individuals[305]	12	24	52	13	65	71

Source: UNHCR Targeting briefing paper

However, at the same time the RRPs are based on agency level needs assessments in

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[300] Hidalgo et. al. (3 November 2014).

[301] Dorcas won a €1 million tender for distributing NFIs to new comers (and cross border support).

[302] UNHCR (n.d.).

[303] Hidalgo (3 November 2014).

[304] This demonstrates that 65 percent of the population is considered moderately or severely vulnerable.

[305] Percentage of individuals included in categories "Moderate" or "Severe Vulnerability": Moderate + severe plus children under 2, Pregnant and Lactating Woman, elderly (>60 years) and non-autonomous individuals (those in need of support for daily basic activities) included in "Mild" and "Low vulnerability" categories. Inclusion of specific categories brings the total to 71 percent.

Lebanon, the quality of which is at times questionable. The thoroughness of UNHCR's targeting process did not prevent assistance- and protection gaps, caused by under-funding and Government policies. UNHCR is addressing these through advocating the authorities, but would need more political back up from its donors for this to become more effective.

4.3.6 Standards

Output standards and standard operational procedures are developed in national level sector working groups and task forces, in consultation with field-based partners. Generally, partners highly value UNHCR as a facilitator for the achievement of appropriate, timely and quality outputs. In Tyre, partners scored adherence to standards at 4 and in Tripoli 3.6 out of 5.

The most pressing problems with standards are in the shelter sector. The Independent UNHCR evaluation finds that "humanitarian standards have been met except in the shelter sector where SPHERE standards were not maintained and in the education sector."[306] The evaluation team observed that "not all temporary shelter and settlement solutions were considered safe and adequate."[307] The harsh winter of 2014-15 has shown this assessment to be correct. Although the UNHCR and its partners prepared for and responded to winterization needs, by mid-January it was still looking for US$ 70 million to finance an adequate response.[308] It reported in this context that "the situation across the region remains precarious for many, particularly given the extremely poor conditions in which refugees are living."[309] At the end of January 2015, IFRC reported that at least four Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including two children, had succumbed to the harsh weather conditions.[310]

UNHCR's own analysis links some substandard results to inappropriate donor conditions[311], which it cannot ignore for political reasons (e.g. promoting trade, using humanitarian assistance to subsidize donor country private enterprise from). Some government policies[312] also inhibited UNHCR's ability to achieve standards. Partners are critical about outcome standards; in the sense that they perceive a lack of common understanding of what these should be, and how these should be measured.[313]

Despite these issues and recurring needs all sources (UNHCR, refugees, partners and the literature) find that UNHCR has performed beyond what could be expected in Lebanon, especially when considering the unfavourable policy context.[314] UNHCR has successfully managed the sometimes competing interests of assistance and protection. In a challenging relationship with the host government, it has effectively prioritized protection in Lebanon, and established robust and well functioning registration mechanisms during a high, rapidly evolving influx of often traumatised refugees who are often reluctant to share their protection needs for political or cultural reasons.

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[306] Hidalgo (3 November 2014).
[307] Ibid.
[308] UN News Centre (16 January 2015).
[309] UNHCR (26 January 2015).
[310] IFRC (27 January 2015).
[311] UNHCR briefing in Tyre.
[312] E.g. in informal settlements, shelters are not permitted to be permanent structures, and some local municipalities or landlords do not permit work such as drainage to be carried out
[313] Partners in Tyre and Tripoli.
[314] Hidalgo (3 November 2014).

4.4   Conclusions and Key challenges

4.4.1 Effectiveness

Our findings confirm those of the independent UNHCR evaluation that "[o]verall UNHCR's response to the influx of refugees in Lebanon has been effective and is considered successful."[315] Despite some shortcomings, RRP results when measured in terms of outputs, coverage and quality were largely achieved, particularly when analysing the protection, shelter and basic sectors. The limited number of refugees we were able to talk to confirmed to have had timely and acceptable levels of shelter, food, water and protection assistance. The overall strong endorsements by its operating and implementing partners indicate that UNHCR successfully created conditions in terms of funding, coordination and advocating authorities, and enabled its partners to deliver humanitarian services and ensure the protection of the refugees. Partners and external stakeholders confirm that UNHCR has successfully scaled up from its relatively modest beginnings at the start of the crisis to a capable if somewhat inefficient platform for coordination, quality assurance and risk management. UNHCR also supported host communities in order to ease the inevitable tensions as a result of the massive influx of refugees. Various observers confirm the importance and quality of UNHCR's work, including municipality authorities, and humanitarian actors independent from UNHCR funding. However, the literature and anecdotal evidence suggests a worrying trend of shrinking protection space due to host government policies, combined with persistent cases of substandard shelter, and with cash programming targeting increasingly smaller numbers due to funding shortages, particularly in winterization and protection.

Knowing what works and what does not, especially whether and how coordination facilitates results effectively and efficiently, requires further research by way of robust sector impact evaluations. The Independent UNHCR evaluation, notes that "[i]n the absence of a significant baseline, confusion in terminology between outputs and outcomes, the treatment of outcomes as sub-objectives (in RRP6), and the struggle to identify relevant indicators, often conflating beneficiaries and benefits, it is difficult to measure progress except as reported." [316] There is a serious lack of impact analysis informing the evolution of programmes.[317] We found only two impact evaluations[318] commissioned by UNHCR (both in conjunction with WFP), only one of which focuses on Lebanon and Jordan.[319] Perception studies are the norm and even in the absence of robust evidence, there is sufficient anecdotal information indicating a widening gap between outputs and outcomes, suggesting that factors outside the control of UNHCR (host government policies and funding levels) are starting to take their toll among the Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

4.4.2 Partnerships

Partnerships provided UNHCR with the implementing capacity it needs to fulfil its mandate. Partners indicated very high levels of satisfaction with the quality of needs assessments and monitoring and reported that UNHCR successfully created the conditions required for achieving outputs of protection and assistance appropriate to the needs of the population.

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[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Impact (def.): the statistically proven socio-economic changes at the level of beneficiaries, which can be verifiably attributed to a project's inputs.
[318] Canteli, Morris and Steen (2012).
[319] http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/funding/thematic-window/jordan-and-lebanon-humanitarian-assistance-thematic-window/

Some partners complain about the lack of equality or even trust in the partnership. Some observers reported that not all local NGOs uphold agreed standards, supporting the view that UNHCR is right in monitoring some of its implementing partners closely. The issue of humanitarian partnership has been the subject of numerous debates and many angles are possible depending on one's agenda. However, most of these debates come to the conclusion that uneven or asymmetrical relationships and funding dependency are ultimately the defining characteristics. Given this the lack of predictability and timely disbursement of funding is a very worrying problem in the system.

UNHCR partnerships have been successfully implemented, but were difficult to manage. Partners vary in size, capacity and ability to engage at operational, tactical and strategic levels. Some observers speak of a "closed system" with "little regard for horizontal connectivity."[320] There seems to be some truth in this given that UNHCR has not succeeded to partner substantially with government institutions, particularly at municipality level and with CBOs challenging the imperative of local ownership and the sustainability of its programmes.

4.4.3 Coordination

The evidence from the literature and field work suggests that coordination was effective[321] and that sector coordination and task forces contribute to commonly shared and well-targeted services, avoid duplication, and set realistic targets. However, we have found indications that it may be less than efficient and that the added value of decentralisation is called into question by other UN agencies and most UNHCR partners.

UNHCR acknowledges that the current system involving a large number of partners is not efficient, and it intends to limit the number of implementing partners. These will then subcontract the smaller NGOs and ensure the quality and manage risks. At this point in time it is not clear to what extent these intermediaries have themselves the willingness or capacities to play this role. On the other hand, some of the local NGOs are looking forward to work in partnership with INGOs (especially those with a development mandate). Other partners question the efficiency of UNHCR's sub-contracting model: as the system is becoming increasingly sophisticated about coordination, the demand for specialization and the costs will continue to increase. Nevertheless, the intended model of working with strong (international) NGOs that subcontract smaller (often local) NGOs seems to be justifiable in terms of efficiency, which may free up space for engaging more directly on strategic and advocacy issues with larger partners. It is too early to say whether this strategy will work. Outsourcing risk management and quality assurance this way may well cause further inefficiencies unless UNHCR rationalises its structure. This analysis would lead us to agree with the conclusion of others that "UN coordination architecture in-country should be rationalised so as to facilitate consensus and unified leadership with respect to the strategic priorities of the response."[322]

4.4.4 Sustainability

The fact that assistance and protection needs have not changed or even deteriorated, shows that the RRP has failed to sustainably improve the situation of refugees in Lebanon. The delivery of relatively high standards of services is no longer feasible given dwindling donor resources. The dire situation in which most refugees find themselves is exacerbated by continuously contracting protection space due to Lebanese Government

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[320] Interviews in Beirut.
[321] Hidalgo (3 November 2014).
[322] Ibid.

policies driven by security concerns and the socio-economic impact on host communities.

The refugee influx surpassed the Lebanese government's capacity for delivering public services, and had an adverse economic impact especially on poor communities hosting the refugees. In response, the system is now adopting a "resilience and stabilization"[323] approach in the overall planning framework, Lebanon's Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). Under the lead of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, the alignment of the refugee response with a broader crisis response potentially adds an element of sustainability to the response through a transfer of responsibility to Government. LCRP aims to centralise Lebanese leadership and institutions, recognising the challenges of development and political stability.

At the same time, ongoing needs among the refugees are likely to become more acute due to newly introduced Lebanese policies and dwindling donor funding. UNHCR's legal protection mandate requires it to remain slightly more critical and distanced from the host government. Its refugee protection mandate is sometimes at odds with the government's agenda, and tensions may well become more profound now the government has made it clear that it wants to put limits on the influx of refugees. For these reasons UNHCR is likely to continue to rely on NGOs particularly in the area of protection even when it needs to improve its dialogue with local authorities especially in areas where hostility against refugees has taken alarming proportions. The political crisis and development needs in Lebanon predate the influx of Syrian refugees, and it seems inappropriate to use humanitarian resources to address what is essentially an internal governance issue. Furthermore, as one World Bank official put it, "resilience should be understood as on top of humanitarian assistance not instead of it."[324] However, if past experience is anything to go by,[325] the feasibility of the resilience strategy is questionable.

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[323] UNHCR (15 December 2014).
[324] Interview in Beirut, 3 November 2014.
[325] UNHCR notes that many municipalities lacking project and financial management capacity has already rendered them ineligible for CSP funding.

5. Syrian Refugees and Humanitarian Assistance in Jordan

This chapter provides an overview of humanitarian assistance and protection provided to Syrian refugees in Jordan and uses the same analytical framework as chapter 4. We start with a short introduction of the Jordanian context (5.1) and than outline in section 5.2 the humanitarian response based mainly on analysis of information from the UNHCR web-portal[326] and focusing on the role of UNHCR and its partners. Section 5.3 summarises the main results. Section 5.4 concludes the analysis and summarises possible implications for Netherlands humanitarian policy.

5.1   Context

Jordan was slow in reducing state subsidies on basic commodities and services. Slowing economic growth coupled with mounting government debts forced Jordan to agree to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) Standby Agreement in August 2012, committing the government to a range of austerity measures. In November that year, an end to petrol and fuel subsidies prompted earlier smaller scale protests following the 'Arab Spring' to escalate into widespread demonstrations. A significant number of indigenous Bedouin tribesmen and East Bankers, viewed by many as King Abdullah's core constituency, took part in the protests as they expressed their grievances over the government's privatization policies. Anger mounted over rampant corruption thought to have reached the highest echelons of power including the royal palace.[327]

Table 5.1: Estimated costs of refugee influx for Jordan[328]

Source	2012	2013	2014	Total 2012-2015(forecast)
Nasser/USAID (2015)		€0.54 billion	€0.8 billion	
Hashemite Kingdom Jordan / Ministry of Planning (2014)				€1.82 billion
Al Wazani/Adenauer Foundation (2014)	€1.5 billion	€1.9 billion (cumulative)	€3.7 billion (cumulative)	
MoPIC (2014)			€ 824 million	

The political- and security implications of the arrival of Syrian refugees and the Syrian crisis generally added considerable strains on the country's already precarious fiscal and socio-economic and fiscal conditions.[329] Where additional spending failed to compensate for refugees' access to services, this fuelled growing discontent among the Jordanian population. As refugees settled in mostly urban areas, anecdotal evidence suggest a steep increase in rents[330] while the growing availability of cheap labour repressed wages and, arguably, put further pressures on considerable unemployment among Jordanians. Many Jordanians, after showing a remarkable degree of hospitality to Syrian refugees, grew weary about their rising numbers and became increasingly critical of the government's policy to allow them to seek protection in Jordan.[331] In September 2012 a poll among Jordanians showed that nearly two-thirds of respondents favoured

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[326] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php
[327] International Crisis Group (12 March 2012).
[328] Estimates of the cost of the refugee influx or crisis vary considerably, and against unclear baselines. For example, the UNHCR figure for end 2012 is 119,399 registered Syrians, while we had another 46,620 awaiting registration on 31 December 2012, meaning a cost of around 9,000 Euro for each known refugee.
[329] On the economic benefits attributed to the arrival of refugees in Jordan, see the comments by Jordanian economist Yusuf Mansour cited in: Hall (24 June 2013).
[330] UNHCR reports that this trend has recently reversed
[331] Several MPs called for the establishment of a "buffer zone" inside Syria to avoid a further influx. Neimat (28 March 2013).

closing the borders to Syrian refugees.[332] Two years later, the same pollster found that the proportion of respondents favouring this had risen to nearly 80 percent.[333]

The Syrian conflict and refugee crisis raised a number of political challenges and security concerns. As Islamist groups began to dominate the Syrian uprising and in neighbouring Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood rose to power, the Jordanian government became increasingly concerned that the influential Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (Islamic Action Front --IAF), would capitalize on growing popular support. The government already was at loggerheads with the IAF's demands for far-reaching constitutional reforms. These differences prompted the IAF to boycott parliamentary elections held in January 2013. Salafist-Jihadist groups, including Jabhat al-Nusra, began to recruit among radicalized Jordanian Sunni Muslims inside Jordan.[334] Fears grew that the country might turn into an Islamist Jihadist hub, posing a significant domestic security challenge to the government and possibly provoke the Syrian regime, which let few opportunities pass to accuse Jordan of harbouring insurgents and terrorists.[335] Jordanian authorities developed increased scrutiny (narrower criteria for access to territory; verification of documentation at security checks around the country; more stringent response to illegal work etc.) measures directed at Syrian refugees and clamped down on local Salafist preachers and activists accused of advocating radical agendas. When IS' territorial gains in Iraq and Syria accelerated in 2014, the Government joined the US-led coalition force against it in September that same year.

The crisis allowed the Government to strengthen its position. The World Bank in July 2013 reversed demands to scrap bread subsidies, in order to avoid widespread unrest. The Syrian crisis also gave a major impetus to Jordan's ties with Arab Gulf states, especially after Jordan joined the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in May 2011, giving it access to financial and military assistance, discounted oil prices, trade and investment opportunities, and humanitarian aid. Recognising Jordan's growing strategic importance in a region in turmoil, US total bilateral aid to Jordan between 2011 and 2014 amounted nearly US$2.4 billion.[336] Syria's civil war also dampened domestic calls for political change and reform, and prompted passive support to the regime. Following the capture of a Jordanian pilot in December 2014 by IS and his violent death, many Jordanians ceased criticism of the government's decision to join the US-led anti-IS coalition, and other anti-government grievances.

5.1.1 Arrivals and Registration

The first Syrian refugees arrived in Jordan in March 2011, shortly after the Syrian Government clamped down on protests in Dar'a.[337] Most refugees originated from Dar'a, 20 kilometres from Irbid, Jordan's second largest city.[338]

Refugees' places of origin changed over time and reflect the evolution of the Syria conflict. In March 2013, more than two thirds (67 %) originated from Dar'a. By the end of 2013, they accounted for slightly over half (52.7 %) of all Syrian refugees, and as

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[332] The poll was by the Jordanian Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS). Neimat (10 September 2012).
[333] Shteiwi, Walsh and Klassen (2014). Another recent poll among Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities suggests that while tensions have risen, mutual perceptions have not yet reached the level of outright hostility or overly negative attitudes. Care International (April 2014).
[334] Pelham (10 January 2013). At the end of 2014, it was estimated that around 1,500 Jordanian fighters had joined radical islamist armed groups in Syria and Iraq. http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s/
[335] Al-Hayat (9 April 2014).
[336] Sharp (17 March 2015).
[337] http://syrianrefugees.eu/?page_id=163
[338] Olwan and Shiyab (2012).

fighting increased in the central and northern areas of Syria, increasing numbers of refugees were driven from Homs (14.9 %), rural Damascus (7.5 %) and Hama (4.5 %). By September 2014, more than one third came from Homs (15.1 %), rural Damascus (9.6 %) and Aleppo (4.5 %), with Dar'a now accounting for 45.9 % of the total.[339]

Figure 5.1. Origins of southern Syrian refugees in Jordan
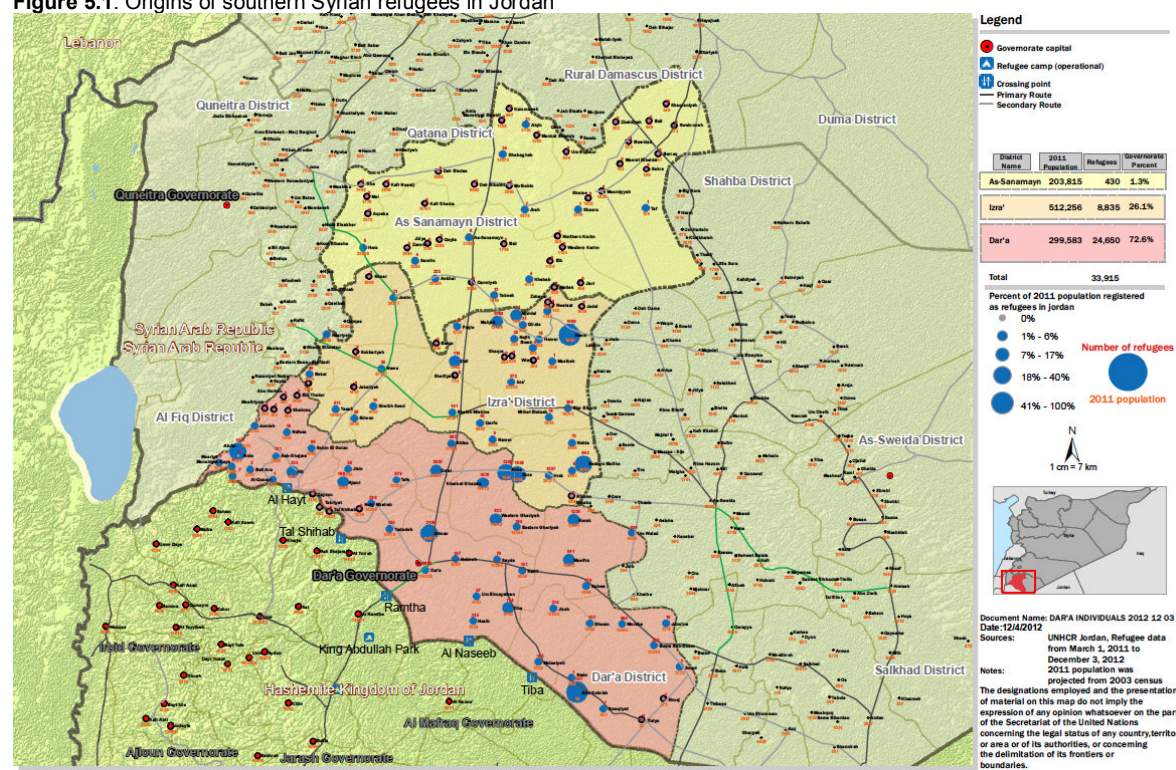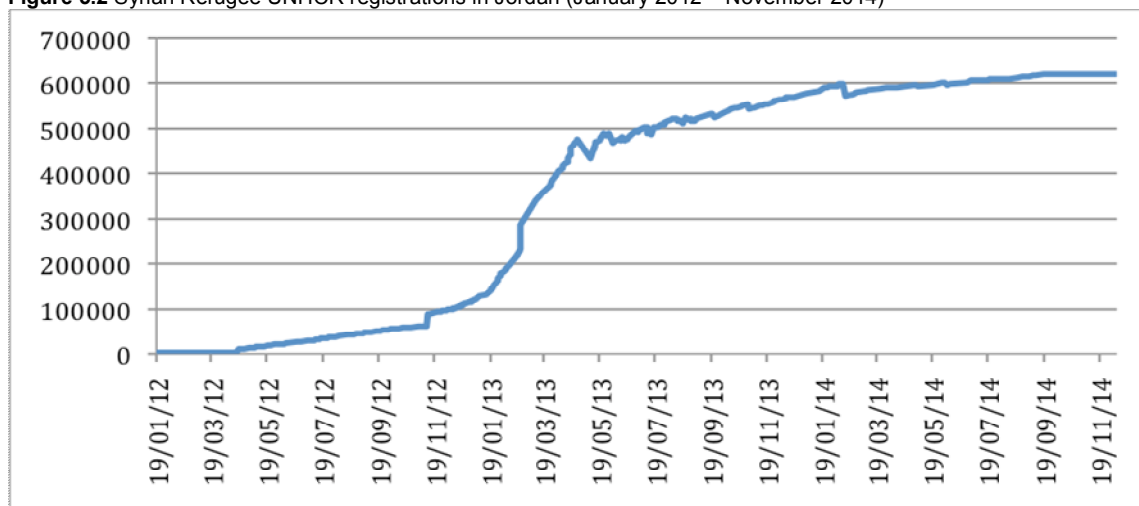

Source: UNHCR

UNHCR's registration capacity expanded in 2013, with new registration centres in Irbid, Raba Sarhan and Amman, allowing Syrian refugees to register on the day of their arrival (in the case of Raba Sarhan) or when they present at UNHCR's urban locations, and contributing to the elimination of remaining backlogs. Figure 5.2 shows that by October 2014, the total number of Syrian refugees reached 620,000 – equivalent to almost 9.6% of the Jordanian population. At the time of our visit, a total of 618,500 Syrians were registered as refugees[340]. The de facto closure of the border by Jordanian authorities in 2014 (see section 5.2.1) left approximately 3,000 Syrian refugees stranded.[341]

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[339] UNHCR registration
[340] "Inter Agency Regional Update" (20 November 2014).
[341] Sweis (12 December 2014).

Figure 5.2 Syrian Refugee UNHCR registrations in Jordan (January 2012 – November 2014)

source: UNHCR registration

UNHCR data (fig.5.3) confirm that actual arrival rate of refugees has fallen from as early as February 2013.

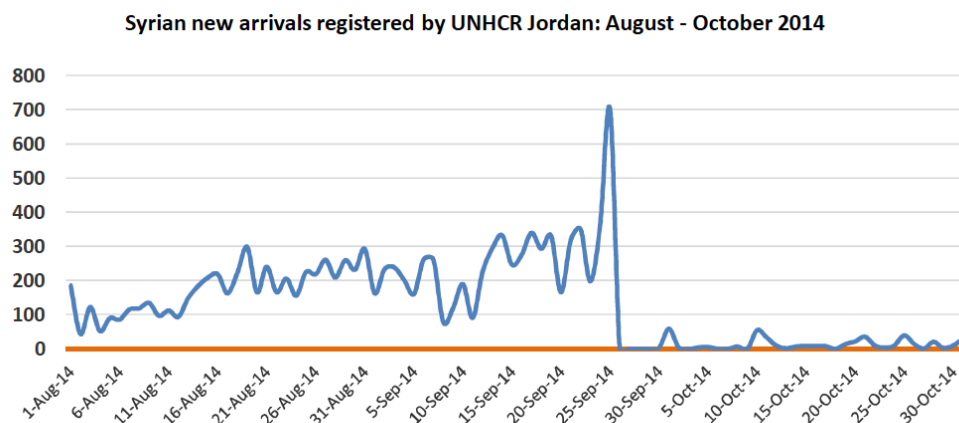**Figure 5.3** Monthly arrival rate of refugees in Jordan August 2014 to October 2014

Syrian new arrivals registered by UNHCR Jordan: August - October 2014

Figure 5.4: Refugees Monthly New Arrivals in Jordan July 2012 to August 2013

Figure 5.4 shows that during the time of our visit in October 2014, only 344 people were officially recorded as new arrivals.[342] UNHCR reports a net decrease in overall refugee

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[342] UNHCR (14 March 2015).

registration.[343] At the time of writing, the Jordanian Government was still receiving new Syrian refugees, albeit under very strict conditions and security scrutiny.

Approximately 85 % of the refugees who settled in Jordan, representing 520,000 people, live in non-camp settings in urban and rural areas. The highest concentrations are in northern and central Jordan, including Amman (27.7 %), Irbid (23.3 %), Mafraq (12.4 %) and Zarqa (8.5 %). [344]

5.2   Humanitarian Response

Between March and July 2011 UNHCR registered 5,391 Syrian refugees in Jordan and by 31 July 2012, 91,374 Syrians had arrived in Jordan, but only about 50% of these registered immediately with UNHCR.

On 2 August 2012, 5,896 Syrians lived in the Ramtha (King Abdullah Park and Cyber City) and Za'atari transit facilities. Za'atari camp was opened on 29 July 2012 with the transfer of 477 Syrians from facilities in Ramtha and by 31 August 2012 the population in Za'atari was 23,378 registered Syrians. The vast majority were scattered among local host communities.[345] In August 2012, 39,600 displaced Syrians were registered, with an additional 2,283 persons waiting to be registered.[346] Even if WFP started to distribute food vouchers, and UNHCR cash, almost from the beginning, large numbers did not register for fear of their personal security.[347] Lack of information may also have played its part.

5.2.1 Appeals and Funding

The first RRP was launched in March 2012. INGOs such as CARITAS started to respond in late 2012[348]. The results of the Jordan section of this appeal were patchy. Although all initial protection and cash needs were fully funded, most other sectors were only covered by 75% at the most, with 50% of the shelter needs not responded to,[349] despite in kind contributions from Gulf states, resulting in competition among the most vulnerable for scarce resources. This may have contributed to unrest and violence in Za'atari, the largest concentration of refugees in Jordan.[350] As in Lebanon, anecdotal evidence suggests that refugees compensated with their own resources and by those provided by host communities and local charitable organisations in Jordan, as international agencies were relatively slow in their response. Food vouchers do not only meet survival needs, but are also tradable (in practice, not purposefully) and represent important opportunities to obtain cash for other purposes (such as health or dental care). The fact that food sector needs were less than 75 percent covered means that these added benefits were limited and required WFP and UNHCR to target assistance only to the most vulnerable causing coverage issues. By the end of 2014 the international community's humanitarian system was still only funding 58 percent of identified needs. Recalculations later showed this to be 75% as the projected beneficiary number was lower than projected. In total for 2013 and 2014, the RRP system brought 1.4 billion USD to Jordan in humanitarian and resilience aid, funded at 70% and 75% respectively.

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[343] UNHCR (13 November 2014).
[344] Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, MoPIC (1 December 2014)*.
[345] Mercy Corps (October 2012).
[346] IMC and UNICEF (12 August 2012).
[347] IFRC and JRC (September 2012).
[348] CARITAS Jordan (16 October 2012).
[349] UNHCR (n.d.).
[350] Luck (23 August 2012).

The main recipient from the RRP is WFP, mostly to cover the huge food sector needs (at a cost of nearly US$18 million per month). UNHCR's RRP component was approximately 25 percent of this amount, and as the second largest recipient, was particularly affected by under-funding. The 2014 mid year review warned that under-funding would expose 1.1 million people to avoidable diseases and poor coverage of a polio vaccination

Table 5.2: Overview of Jordan overall coordinated humanitarian response 2013 (expenditure) and 2014 (projected requirements):

Sector	Lead	Expenditure 2013 US$ (million)[351]	Budget 2014[352]	UNHCR RRP component (2014)	Main RRP partners (2014)
Protection	UNHCR	95.4	169.1	56.7	UNHCR, IRC
Food	WFP	256.5	322.1	1.4	WFP, FAO, JHCO, CARITAS
Shelter	UNHCR, NRC	196.5	136.5	99.5	UNHCR, IOM, NRC, JHAS, UN-Habitat, ACTED
NFIs	UNHCR, NRC	75.9	104.2	54.0	UNHCR, NRC, WVI, JHAS, CARE, Mercy Corps, UNFPA
WASH	UNHCR, UNICEF	136.9	153.8	19.5	UNICEF, UNICEF, UNDP, ACTED, RI, Mercy Corps
Health	UNHCR, WHO	87.4	120.0	24.6	UNHCR, WHO, UNICEF, IMC, JHAS, CARITAS
Cash	UNICEF, CARE	57.1	107.6	56.8	UNHCR, CARE, SCI, IRC, DRC, HI, ACTED, ACF
Education	UNICEF, SCI	70.7	86.3	3.8	UNICEF, NRC, UNHCR, CARITAS, SCI
Total		**1016**	**1223**	**355**	

Sources: Syria Regional Response Plan 6 – 2013 Final Report and 2014 RRP: Indicative requirement.

campaign, and that 10,000 people could lose access to treatment for non-communicable diseases. It also warned that 83,000 vulnerable refugees in urban areas would not receive monthly cash assistance during the last quarter of the year.[353] The 40 percent funding shortfall required UNHCR to target RRP assistance to only the most vulnerable cases leaving a large number of people without humanitarian assistance. UNHCR's appeals are based on verified needs assessments and it takes the principle of impartial assistance very seriously. Warnings about the implications of under-funding for refugees have consistently become evident (see section 5.3), but never led to full coverage of any of the appeals.

The impact of underfunding was somewhat mitigated by the fact that population numbers were lower than expected. The Government repeatedly cautioned that it could not host more refugees due to its limited resources and inadequate international assistance. It claimed that its education and healthcare systems were on the verge of collapse as it had to accommodate 140,000 Syrian pupils while the number of Syrians seeking healthcare at public hospitals rose by 600 percent.[354] The Government presented its own Response Plan(s) showing the costs of the refugee influx and requested international relief efforts to include host communities' needs and associated Jordanian government costs. In September 2014, the Jordanian government said it was in need of foreign assistance amounting to US$4.5 (€4 billion) to deal with the refugee crisis.[355]

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[351] UNHCR (n.d.). https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=5658
[352] 2014 RRP6: Indicative requirement. Final expenditures not yet reported at the time of writing.
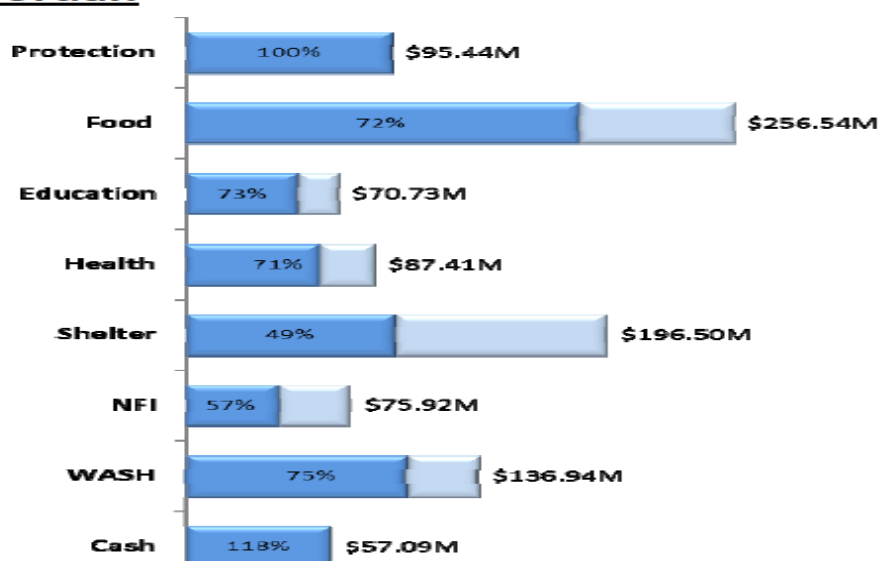[353] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).
[354] Ibid.
[355] Minister of Planning Ibrahim Saif cited by Petra News (1 September 2014).

Figure 5.5 RRP5 Funding shortfalls per sector (end of year 2013):

Jordan

Sector	%	Amount
Protection	100%	$95.44M
Food	72%	$256.54M
Education	73%	$70.73M
Health	71%	$87.41M
Shelter	49%	$196.50M
NFI	57%	$75.92M
WASH	75%	$136.94M
Cash	118%	$57.09M

source: UNHCR RRP5 Final Report

5.2.2 Jordanian Government Policies

Like Lebanon, Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 refugee convention or its 1967 Protocol but it did sign a memorandum of understanding with UNHCR under which it receives technical and policy support. The Memorandum of Understanding also states the cooperation between UNHCR and Jordan on issues of international protection, including by defining the concept of who is a refugee and the principle of non-refoulement.

The Government proactively ensures that the international humanitarian system's programmes are closely harmonized with its own policies. An example of strategic importance is the introduction of iris-scan technology in registration and cash programming. The immigration department and security services, use the same system and many refugees perceive a link between refugee data to other information management systems and policies, even if encryption prevents misuse. This does not always encourage registration of vulnerable refugees[356] and discouraged some NGOs from reporting to the international coordination system.[357] Need assessment questionnaires require approval and, as programming is needs-based, this can lead to biases. Some partners report delays in project approval and implementation as a result.[358]

Employment is subject to a costly work permit for Syrian refugees and health care is becoming very difficult to access for the most vulnerable. The resulting precarious situation is compounded by cuts to cash distributions and the erratic and under-funded food voucher programmes, leaving Syrian refugees with only illegal livelihood opportunities to meet the ever-increasing living costs in Jordan. Negative coping mechanisms are on the rise, exposing the most vulnerable to increased protection risks.

Initially failing camp security in Za'atari raised concerns about inadequate protection. In October 2013 Amnesty International reported high crime levels in the camp and other

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[356] UNHCR partner in Amman: "Beneficiaries are sometimes afraid to talk to UNHCR, and don't call the hotline because they are afraid they will be referred to the police." Interview in Amman.
[357] External stakeholder and partner interviews in Amman.
[358] Mafraq partner interviews.

security-related fears.[359] In March and early April 2014 riots broke out in the camp in response to the killing of a refugee. The Jordanian government blamed pro-Syrian regime "sleeper cells"[360] but given a noticeable drop in security incidents in Za'atari both before and after, the incident appears to have been anomalous. Regardless, refugees reportedly resented camp authorities' reliance on the mediation of local strongmen among the refugees in the camp who act as "street presidents". This is alleged to have encouraged corruption involving such 'street presidents' as they reportedly use their influence to build clientelistic ties to the refugee community.[361] Compounding these problems, UNHCR and the Jordanian Gendarmerie reportedly established links with different refugee interlocutors, raising questions about security enforcement responsibilities in the camp.[362] However, no major security incidents are reported since, and UNHCR appears to have discouraged the emergence of local bosses in Azraq camp by establishing direct relations with refugee communities from the start.

At the same time the Government closed dozens of informal crossing points into Jordan while border authorities reportedly announced in June 2013 and again in October 2013 that they would limit access for Syrians without valid identification papers, Syrians of Palestinian origin, Iraqi refugees, and unaccompanied males.[363] Syrian males with no family are no longer allowed entry following reports of former FSA fighters joining IS ranks.[364] UNHCR supports re-registration but advocates for flexibility through pre-arrangements with border security authorities. During our visit in October and November 2014, reports emerged about thousands of Syrian refugees stuck at the Syrian side of the border without access to appropriate shelter or basic facilities as they were denied entry. UNHCR registered virtually no refugees since 25 September. The Syrian Refugees Affairs Directorate (SRAD) confirmed a sharp reduction in new arrivals but refuted that Jordan denied refugees access, explaining the smaller numbers by a lull in fighting in Dar'a governate.[365] Yet satellite imagery dated 2 November and posted by UNOSAT, appeared to contradict such claims. The photographs showed a large number of makeshift shelters in the open desert at the Rubkan border crossing.[366] On 4 December new satellite imagery again showed "probable shelters," this time in the open desert near Hadalat border crossing.[367]

Meanwhile the Government's policy aims to encourage the population to move from urban areas to the camps by stricter labour and settlement law enforcement and providing services exclusively in Za'atari and Azraq camps. As of 14 July 2014, the Government began to apply an encampment policy more strictly, including by issuing instructions to UNHCR to cease registration in urban areas of persons having left the camps without a 'bail-out'. The Government also increased forced relocations to the camps of individuals without "bail-out" documents, coupled with denial of access to services in urban areas for those who had not regularized their situation in non-camp settings.

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[359] Amnesty International (31 October 2013).
[360] al-Samadi (9 April 2014).
[361] Sullivan (14 October 2014).
[362] Ibid.
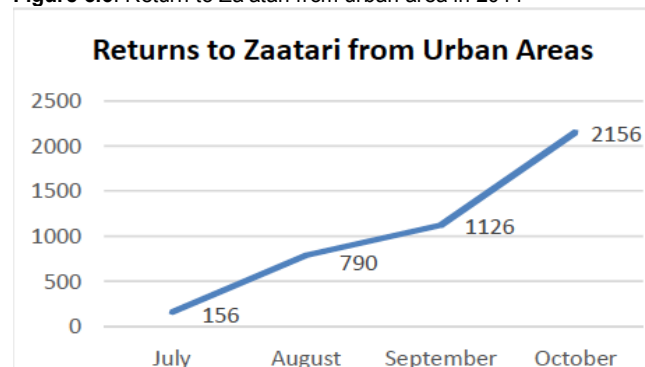[363] al-Samadi (13 June 2013); Amnesty International (31 October 2013).
[364] UNHCR Protection Unit briefing Amman.
[365] Interview in Amman, 5 November 2014.
[366] UNOSAT (2 November 2014).
[367] UNOSAT (4 December 2014).

Figure 5.6: Return to Za'atari from urban area in 2014

This graph suggest that the encampment strategy is working. In November 2014 UNHCR reported that Za'atari reached full capacity. This prompted UNHCR to transfer refugees to Azraq camp, which opened in May 2014. However, the camp's remote location and harsh living conditions, act as deterrents.[368] UNHCR currently only accepts new arrivals in Za'atari under specific circumstances such as family reunification.

5.2.3 UNHCR

UNHCR plays the same assistance and protection coordination role as it does in Lebanon, under the same mandate (see Chapter 4.2). UNHCR initially responded with its pre-crisis capacity when the first refugees came across the border near Ramtha. It scaled up significantly and now maintains five offices in Jordan, including Amman Head Quarters, which includes Amman Field Office, Mafraq sub-office (with responsibilities for Za'atari camp, border monitoring and Mafraq Governate), Irbid Field Office and Azraq Field office. Amman, Mafraq and Irbid offices also contain registration sites, in addition to mobile registration facilities. UNHCR's operational requirements in Jordan increased from US$ 62.8 million in 2010 to a revised 2013 budget of US$ 367.6 million. The budget for the 2014 emergency response for Syrian refugees is US$ 430.4 million.[369] It employs 779 staff (114 of whom are international).[370]

5.2.4 Coordination

Consistent with the Independent UNHCR evaluation,[371] and as in Lebanon, different partners value the sector system differently. At the top-level, coordination between UNHCR and the HCT, Resident Representative (Res Rep) and the HC was marred by ambiguity over responsibilities in refugee operations. Although respective responsibilities in such situations were set out in April 2014 in a letter co-signed by the ERC and High Commissioner. Those provisions have not been applied in Jordan as it is not considered an L3 emergency even if Amman coordination includes regional responsebilities related to the Syria crisis as whole.

The Independent UNHCR evaluation finds that most negative impressions concern coordination between OCHA and UNHCR's, and UNHCR's perceived "double/triple hatting" as implementer, coordinator, and funder."[372] As in Lebanon, partners and others are concerned that the system is overly elaborate with too many layers, task forces and other specialised functions.

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[368] During summer temperatures in Azraq can reach up to 45 degrees celcius. "The site is definitely not ideal, we've tried to make the best of it." Steffen Horstmeier of World Vision cited in Ammun News (28 April 2014).
[369] UNHCR (n.d.) (c).
[370] Ibid.
[371] "While UN, NGO, and UNHCR respondents have mixed perspectives regarding UNHCR's coordination role, donors and INGOs tend towards more negative comments." Hidalgo (3 November 2014).
[372] Ibid.

Especially in urban settings partners value coordination meetings as useful for sharing best practices, standardization and cross-checking to avoid duplication. Partners concur that the right actors participate in the meetings but that local NGOs and CBOs are underrepresented which does not allow them to cross check or refer beneficiaries with these agencies.[373] Unlike in Lebanon, essential government bodies actively participate, especially in the shelter and protection sectors. Those who see themselves mostly as implementers of UNHCR's programmes are content with the WWW agendas of the meetings, whereas the more prolific INGOs see opportunities to take coordination to a higher, more strategic level[374] even if we found some evidence that contingency planning and vulnerability assessments were on the agenda of coordination meetings[375].

5.2.5 UNHCR Partners

The analysis in this section is based on UNHCR partner perspectives on selection, needs assessments, monitoring, coordination and results. These were gathered in interviews with UNHCR partners in Amman, Irbid and Mafraq.

The RRP overall operational framework in Jordan consists of the Government of Jordan, 12 UN agencies, 51 national and international NGOs. Sector coordination is based in Amman, as most staff commutes daily between the capital and refugee locations, predominantly in the north (Irbid and Mafraq), to participate in sub-working groups and coordination fora in the relevant Governorates and camps. UNHCR collaborates with other UN agencies in the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), chaired by the UNHCR Country Representative and composed of heads of main UN agencies, the INGO Forum, ICRC and key donors. IATF is the main coordination body, overseeing overall refugee response. It also works on cross sector issues such as gender mainstreaming. In addition, the International NGO (INGO) Forum, with 53 participants, collaborates on setting strategic policies and advocates for improved service delivery and protection policies. UN agencies and NGOs chair the sectors and sub-sectors.

UNHCR coordinates the Syrian refugee response in collaboration with the Government of Jordan and acts as "facilitator of collective decision-making."[376] The Government has the overall (policy) lead, and UNHCR leads the coordination of the eight sector working groups through the Inter Sector Working Group (ISWG). In 2013, the Government established the SRCD (Syrian Refugee Camps Directorate), under the Ministry of Interior, to coordinate activities in refugee camps. In 2014, this became the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD) with responsibility also for refugees outside the camps as the primary government institution for the refugee response. Other institutions involved are the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and most significantly the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The Ministry of Public Works which develops and manages the Azraq and Za'atari infrastructure, is an implementing partner. Collaboration is particularly strong in the protection sector particularly in child protection, gender based violence and psycho-social interventions. The Government of Jordan (including the Ministry of Social Development, the Family Protection Department, the Juvenile Police Department and the National Council for Family Affairs) and international actors collaborate to align national protection and coordination mechanisms and to ensure that Syrians have access to national protection mechanisms and programmes where appropriate.

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[373] Partner interviews in Amman, Mafraq and Irbid.

[374] UNHCR partners: "Coordination platforms should be used more to discuss analysis and advocacy." and 'There is no coordinated discussion at working group level on what to do when funding stops and "We need to urgently discuss the consequences of WFP funding situation." Interviews in Amman October 2014.

[375] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107

[376] As described by UNHCR Leadership during Amman briefing.

Average	Camp	Urban	Overall
RRP months	27	25	25.6
No. of RRP grants	2.2	3.8	3.4
UNHCR % of budget	34.2	17.5	22.3
Output	5.0	4.9	4.9
Outcome	3.0	3.4	3.3
Standards	3.7	4.4	4.2
Coverage	3.5	2.8	3.0
Needs assessment	4.5	3.4	3.8
Monitoring	4.0	3.0	3.3
Predictable and Timely	5.0	4.0	4.4
Coordination	3.1	3.6	3.5

5.2.6 Partner Selection

As part of the new Partnership Management process, UNHCR launched a Call for Expressions of Interest in August 2014 for interventions with a running time of between 3 to 12 months. The purpose was to solicit interest from partners wishing to obtain UNHCR funding, or as UNHCR put it, those "willing to participate in a UNHCR operation and contribute complementary resources (human resources, knowledge, funds, in-kind contributions, supplies and/or equipment) to achieving common objectives as agreed in a Project Partnership Agreement."[377]The selection process includes a risk and track record assessment, and a quality check of the of needs assessments used to justify the intervention and resulted in implementing partnerships with four UN agencies (IOM, UNOPS, UNRWA, and UNV), five government departments, and 15 NGOs (five of which Jordanian). [378]

In Amman, Mafraq and Irbid we spoke to six of UNHCR's implementing partners and to eight operational partners[379] addressing protection, shelter and cash needs. In Mafraq we also included agencies that implement in Za'atari, including representatives of two Government departments, UN and Red Cross organisations and local and international NGOs. Most partner worked with UNHCR for several years, some already during the Iraqi refugee response in Jordan, and as such are familiar with UNHCR systems and procedures. We also spoke to refugees when visiting a child protection centre, a collective shelter unit in Mafraq and during home visits in Amman and Irbid. These partners represent a varied and diverse range of actors in terms of responsibility, mandate, vision, mission and technical expertise. Collectively they are part of UNHCR's implementation capacity. On average they have worked in the RRP framework for just over two years at the time of the interviews and received more than three RRP grants. UNHCR funding component is less than a quarter on average (a third for those operating in Za'atari). The camps-level partners we interviewed are twice as dependent on UNHCR funding than their 'urban' counterparts, which may account for some of the differences in perceptions on needs assessments, monitoring, coordination and results.

5.2.7 Needs assessments

UNHCR and partners continued to invest in information management tools, including improvements to the refugee response portal (data.unhcr.org), protection incident monitoring (Inter-Agency Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS)) and case management tools (Inter-Agency Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS),[380] and a RRP6 specific tool[381] for online activities, planning, tracking and reporting specifically.

NGOs are responsible for undertaking the needs assessment required to design their interventions, which may account for why the quality (in terms of accuracy and a solid basis for programme design) is rated at a very high level (4.5 out of 5). Unsurprisingly, this is even more true for partners operating in Za'atari camp. Assessments are more challenging in open situations such as the urban areas, than in closed settings like

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[377] UNHCR (n.d.) (c).
[378] Ibid.
[379] Implementing partners receive (part of their) RRP funding as a UNHCR subcontractor; operating partners do not receive UNHCR funding, but coordinate in other ways (e.g. by participating in sector working groups).
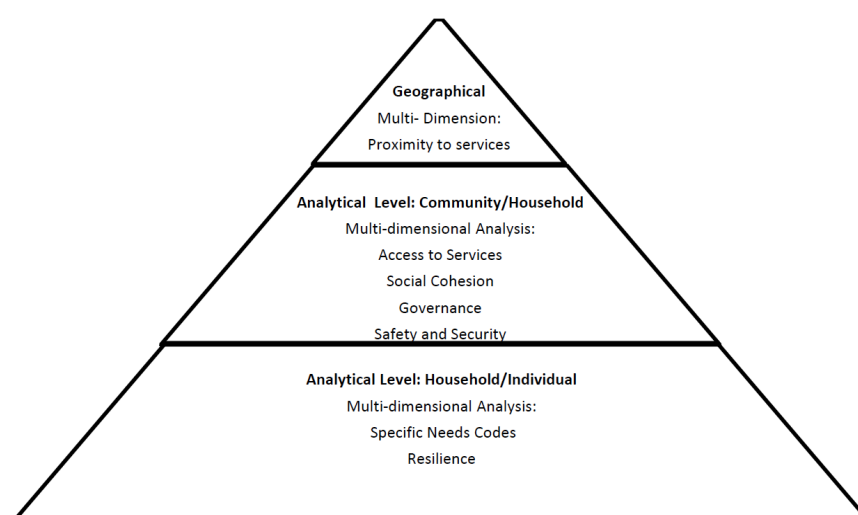[380] Online versions of both the CPIMS and GBVIMS are being piloted by UNHCR in Jordan.
[381] http://www.syrianrefugeeresponse.org

Za'atari. The fact that non-camp needs assessments, including questionnaires and other assessment tools require prior approval from MoPIC makes the process slow and bureaucratic in urban areas which may also account for a lower appreciation. UNHCR has developed a needs assessment registry and guidelines to ensure some coordination.

The main interagency needs assessment framework is the sector coordinated Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) the development of which started in 2014 and was launched in January 2015. The VAF is based on predicted expenditure expanding on pilot work carried out by UNHCR and the World Bank in 2014. However, partners judge it to be more participatory and adjusted to sector indicators developed in the sector working groups. Partners highly value the comprehensiveness and participatory nature of the development of the needs assessments system as positives.[382]

Figure 5.7: The conceptual framework for Vulnerability Assessment[383]

Geographical
Multi- Dimension:
Proximity to services

Analytical Level: Community/Household
Multi-dimensional Analysis:
Access to Services
Social Cohesion
Governance
Safety and Security

Analytical Level: Household/Individual
Multi-dimensional Analysis:
Specific Needs Codes
Resilience

However, complexity and participation also meant that the system took time to develop and made validation a cumbersome process. Despite efforts to improve needs assessment coordination, some partners expressed reservations about the accuracy of needs assessments. For instance, WFP needed to tighten its targeting in the second half of 2014, due to funding shortfalls, which affects urban programmes disproportionally. VAF was not formalized in time but was still used to assist WFP in this process.[384] WFP informed partners that they expect a 7-10 percent error (7,000-12,000 people) in their targeting exercise, affecting mainly cash and protection partners who were, according to one partner, not informed on the criteria used by WFP to exclude beneficiaries from the list. However, WFP did explain the process to partners and refugees. This may have contributed to some in-efficiencies in data collection, reflected in the lower score by urban partners 3.5 out of five.

The Home Visit project[385] was launched in 2012 as part of UNHCR's cash assessment program. Between March 2012 and October 2013, 61,823 homes were visited by IRD (International Relief and Development) outreach workers and a smaller number by UNHCR staff with standard questionnaires collecting data on migration patterns,

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[382] Almost all partners mentioned this spontaneously during interviews.
[383] ACAPS and UNHCR (26 September 2013).
[384] Interview with UNHCR Senior Field Coordinator.
[385] IRD and UNHCR (2013 & 2014).

population characteristics, living conditions, refugee household budget analysis, and health and education needs. This work continued in 2014 and although the quality and comprehensiveness is impressive, but it is unclear how the analysis is used to inform programming decisions. There are also concerns about duplication with post distribution monitoring, as some areas correspond with the Home Visit questionnaires. Even if they serve different purposes, data collection can be rationalised.

It seems perhaps surprising that UNHCR does not have needs assessments tools ready prior to a refugee crisis. RAIS, the off-the-shelf tool, was unable to capture refugee mobility and did not interface with the iris scan systems. Nevertheless, and even if tools like this need to be contextualised, given the crucial role of needs assessments in programming decision-making, it is critical that UNHCR have needs assessment tools ready and design procedures and processes to roll them out much faster.

5.2.8 Monitoring

UNHCR Jordan developed information management to facilitate coordinated planning and implementation by partners. It successfully incorporated iris scan technology already in use in several government systems in registration and cash programming, which greatly contributed to overall confidence in data and information management. The new technology also facilitated accurate referral and targeting.

Partners operating in camps expressed higher levels of appreciation with the quality of monitoring information then those in urban areas. This is not unusual as similar to needs assessments, closed settings represent a more controlled data environment than open settings, where populations are more geographically, socially and economically mobile. This, and the fact that partners report an ability to achieve higher standards, are likely to be among the reasons why refugees prefer living in urban areas.[386]

UNHCR requires all partners to work with ActivityInfo for accountability and reporting outputs and basic coordination characteristics, such as the WWW overviews. Refugee level (outcome) information reporting and exchange all benefited from the standardization of PDM tools through the monitoring and evaluation taskforce. Data are entered into RAIS database and used for targeting, referral and follow up. However not all partners understand how to use these tools for project management purposes. The diverse nature of partners and their own internal systems designed to meet other back donor requirements, compounded utility challenges. As a consequence, different monitoring systems appear to exist in parallel, and some partners just use Excel to include lists of beneficiaries and some partners. The Independent UNHCR evaluation also found that different NGOs report on different indicators and targets.[387] UNHCR is aware that partners need additional support and training to be able to use the systems. It cites high staff turnover as a major factor challenging coordinated use.[388] However, other analysis demonstrates more fundamental information management issues[389].

5.3   Results

The analysis in this section is not intended as a comprehensive evaluation of RRP results or UNHCR performance, but explores results in terms of output, outcome, coverage, and

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[386] Ibid.
[387] Ibid.; Hidalgo (3 November 2014).
[388] UNHCR Amman briefings.
[389] Reference to both the strengths and weaknesses of the IM systems, training and support can be found at http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=2704 and http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=6158

quality (standards) in order to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of Netherlands supported humanitarian assistance.

5.3.1 Protection

As in Lebanon the UNHCR partnership achieved a very impressive set of protection outputs in 2013 and 2014.[390] Partners confirmed[391] that these outputs were part of what they see as a perfect record (5 out of 5).

However, increasingly RRP outputs lag behind schedule and protection concerns are among the most important, especially for those living in non-camp settings. Protection outputs did not prevent negative outcomes such as continuing deportation, refoulement and family separation (also between camp and non-camp), and forced encampment. The Independent UNHCR evaluation notes "growing concern that UNHCR and its partners are not fully meeting refugees' protection needs in Jordan."[392] It identified opportunities for UNHCR to improve the integration of protection in assistance programmes, notable in shelter. Increased debt and a lack of livelihoods opportunities create a deepening dependence on humanitarian assistance or reliance on negative coping strategies such as limiting food consumption and children's access to education, marrying off children or sending them to work.[393] Gender based violence is widespread and may be under-reported as victims are often afraid to speak openly.[394] Early marriages are common with 51.3 percent of female and 13 percent of male respondents in a recent survey said they married when they were still children.[395] While the majority of early marriages amongst the Syrian population were conducted in Syria, UNHCR and protection partners are working to prevent and respond to early marriage through awareness campaigns[396] conducted with the community, religious leaders and with the Shari'a Court and through provision of counselling and multi-sectoral services through a network of service providers and safe spaces. 30 percent of Syrian refugee children born in Jordan do not have birth certificates and similar gaps exist for marriages, deaths, and other family-related certificates.[397] The establishment of a Shari'a Court in Zaatari, mobile presence of the Office of the Civil Registrar in the refugee camps, awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of birth and marriage documentation, and exceptional Cabinet exemptions from fines for late registration, may have contributed to increased levels of civil registry documentation held by Syrians. While all demographic groups of refugees reported high levels of distress resulting from exposure to violent conflict and relocation, women and children in particular lack access to community support and social coping mechanisms due to the lack of safe spaces for them to meet and socialize outside of the home.[398] The number of safe spaces outside of camps increased in 2014. These function as a location for the delivery of psychosocial support, and for identification and referral of child protection and SGBV cases.[399]

Other protection targets seem relatively low and designed around feasibility rather than needs. For instance, 6,086 individuals were submitted for resettlement in 2014, (0.9% of

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[390] UNHCR (n.d.) (a).
[391] Partner interview in Amman, Mafraq and Irbid.
[392] Hidalgo (3 November 2014)
[393] Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, MoPIC (1 December 2014).
[394] Ibid.
[395] Save the Children (2014).
[396] Amani Campaign, Interagency child protection and gender based violence campaign, Jordan 2014 p 12, data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=5569
[397] Ibid.
[398] UN Women (2013).
[399] Jordan SGBV Sub-Working Group, Women and Girls Safe Spaces (2014), http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=107&Id=35

registered refugees in Jordan) when over 200,000 refugees, many of whom Syrian, tried to reach Europe in 2014 alone (see also the Lebanon section of this report).

5.3.2 Shelter

Since 2012, refugees required a total of 120,000 housing units to accommodate Syrian refugees in host communities in addition to the almost 90,000 people living in camps. In 2012, conditions in Za'atari were harsh.[400] However, UNHCR partners upgraded Za'atari from an emergency to a basic services camp with improved infrastructure and shelter facilities. Nevertheless, standards in Za'atari vary significantly according refugees' time of arrival. Early settlers have better quality shelter than new arrivals who are more likely to live in tents.[401] At the beginning of 2014, the camp hosted approximately 125,000 people, 64,000 people of whom in emergency tents,[402] and the remainder in 15,000 pre-fabricated containers. 91.6% of needs assessment survey respondents listed shelter assistance as a critical ongoing need. In camps, significant investments are required to meet basic necessities.[403] REACH identified that 75.2% of shelters in Al Za'atari are caravans, implying that almost a quarter of the population live in tents.[404] In January 2015, when heavy snow hit Za'atari, a number of tents collapsed, and it became evident that refugees continue to have needs that UNHCR and its partners are unable to service, despite their best efforts.[405]

Support to refugees in urban settings focused on winterization, provision of additional shelter units, and upgrading housing to adequate standards. Azraq camp was prepared to receive 52,000 people, but by the end of 2013, only 406 semi-permanent T-shelter units were installed. Many refugees continue to live in expensive and substandard accommodation in urban areas. On average a refugee family can expect to pay approximately JOD150 (US$ 210) to rent a two bedroom flat for one month.[406]

A source of concern is that increasing numbers of displaced Syrians built informal tented settlements (ITS) in rural and peri-urban settings as they can no longer afford to live in host communities and are increasingly unwilling or unable to reside in official camps. Some groups, like nomads and agricultural workers may have chosen to live in ITS. There are now 87 informal settlements hosting a total of 7,028 individuals identified across five governorates. Analysis indicates a 113 percent increase in the number of ITS residents compared to December 2013.[407] However, more recently the situation seems to have stabilised. ITS are illegal under Jordanian law[408] and its occupants are exposed to serious protection risks and among those with the most urgent needs for assistance.[409]

5.3.3 Livelihoods

From the beginning of 2013 partners provided three types of cash assistance depending on the particular profile of the refugee household:

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[400] In August 2012 Andrew Harper, UNHCR representative in Jordan, reportedly described the situation in Za'atari as being "very harsh": "I do not wish to paint a rosy picture about the camp, but there is no other choice. They [the refugees] were brought here because there is no other choice. The UNHCR is trying to deal with the harsh conditions in the camp. Unfortunately, the expectations of the refugees are higher than the realities." al-Du'mah (20 August 2012).
[401] UNHCR, Jordan Refugee Response (September 2014).
[402] Ibid.
[403] Jordan Response Plan 2015.
[404] UNHCR and REACH (June 2014).
[405] WFP (14 January 2015).
[406] In interviews, refugees in Amman and Mafraq quoted rents as high as 400 JOD per month.
[407] UNICEF and REACH (June 2014).
[408] With the exception of Bedouin and Nawar
[409] Hidalgo (3 November 2014).

1. regular monthly cash assistance or time-bound monthly assistance;
2. one-off or 'staggered' urgent cash assistance to address a specific financial shock or need that is not covered by other forms of available assistance;
3. seasonal or specific assistance including winterization support or support for new arrivals.[410]

By September 2013, 8,246 families received urgent cash assistance, 24,930 families with regular cash assistance, and 9,268 families with seasonal assistance.[411] WFP supplies cash for food (e-vouchers) to 98% of refugees. 21,000 households receive unconditional cash, with 7,000 households approved but currently on stand by due to the lack (or uncertainty) of funding.[412] Yet the most recent update on cash distribution results confirming partner perspectives that outputs against targets are on track in 2014.[413]

Respondents to a rapid assessment in July 2012 expected to remain displaced for the foreseeable future and were unclear about how they would continue to cover household costs as their displacement continued into the winter period. [414] The assessment showed that an average sized family requires JOD 320 (USD 450) a month to cover household expenses, excluding rent. The majority of survey respondents reported increasing hardships despite having received assistance in various forms.[415] According to more recent Home Visit data,[416] a majority of respondents said they relied on humanitarian assistance and charity but a growing number reported receiving income from work.[417] Given that legal employment is strongly discouraged, and as this policy is now much more strictly enforced, there are reasons to believe that cash handouts are now the main source of income for Syrian refugees, even if the Government estimates that over 125,000 Syrians work without permits.

It can be concluded that the cash programme has been very successful in meeting Syrian refugees' essential needs in an appropriate and dignified manner. Analysis shows that cash meets urgent needs (particularly for renting shelter) of Syrian refugees in Jordan. It represents a "flexible and responsive means to augment the work of other sectors."[418] Yet there have been contradicting findings on the broader and longer term impact and effectiveness of cash programming in Jordan, prompting the need for more and specialised research.[419] However, refugees have ongoing needs for food assistance indicated by the fact that 85 percent of refugees would not have sufficient access to food without WFP assistance.[420] Jordan's cost of living is among the highest in the Middle East, and low income and limited income-earning opportunities remain the most restraining factor to food access, compounded by rising prices.

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[410] Ibid.
[411] UNHCR (n.d.) (a).
[412] Ibid.
[413] UNHCR (August 2014).
[414] CHF (July 2012).
[415] 50 percent of respondents stated that they were unable to find work, and that they rely on charity as their principle source of income (31%). Focus group participants report that wages for Syrian refugees had fallen below standard market rates. 95 percent of survey respondents reported complete depletion of remaining household savings. All survey respondents indicated that they have received food assistance from local charities, while 77 percent had received household/Non-food items. 68.7 percent reported having benefited from cash assistance, though the value and frequency of cash transfers varied considerably, ranging from one-time distributions of JD20 [USD30] to larger sums sufficient to cover household expenses for two months or more. Ibid.
[416] Syrian Refugees Living Outside Camps – Home Visit Data Findings 2013.
[417] Between March 2012 and October 2013.
[418] Hidalgo (3 November 2014).
[419] See e.g.: Sloane (January 2014); Husain, Bauer and Sandström (April 2014); Hidalgo (3 November 2014).
[420] WFP and REACH (2014).

5.3.4 Coverage

Partners in Jordan report that generally speaking RRP coverage has been satisfactory, but it is increasingly becoming a source of concern. There are two main reasons for this.

Firstly, under-funding (75 percent of RRP6 2014) compounded with poor predictability affected all assistance sectors, but particularly the food sector, which has knock-on effects undermining refugees' broader coping strategies. WFPs monthly budget of 23.3 million US$[421] is financed on a monthly basis, but donor commitments are erratic, creating significant stress on the system and affected populations. WFP is barely able to maintain coverage and only at a cost of reduced standards.[422] According to UNHCR officials confirm that reductions are 'fund-driven and not needs-driven'[423].

Vouchers are not only important to ensure food security but refugees also exchange them for cash they need for urgent shelter, health or education expenses. The lack of predictability results in the need for constant targeting and readjusting of plans, and it prevents WFP from planning ahead for more than a month, creating inefficiencies in programme management. WFP was forced twice in late 2014 to alert donors to the consequences of eminent funding short falls and was bailed out only at the last minute on both occasions. WFP targeted 7 percent of vulnerable households, but needs to cut another 15 percent due to continuous funding shortfalls[424].

The second reason is related to Government policies, particularly affecting protection and livelihood status and access to health care. Although refugees (apart from the very limited number who were able to obtain a work permit) were never allowed to work, this policy is now much more strictly enforced, thereby exposing refugees to risks of expulsion, imprisonment, or eviction. Refugees are now required to pay fees, which the most vulnerable cannot afford. Although we have not received documented reports of refoulement, other analysis shows that such cases are increasing. In addition to these cases UNHCR notes that "the overwhelming majority of returnees interviewed over the past year cite either a lack of livelihoods or family reunification as the primary reason for returning to Syria".[425] People living in ITS are among those most at risk. Partners confirmed the need for increased cash assistance because of severely reduced services (especially in urban areas). Cash and protection partners report that recent WFP cuts put more pressure on cash requirements.

Most partners confirmed a shrinking protection space in Jordan. People increasingly sell their food vouchers and reports of begging, child labour and sex work are on the increase. Smaller numbers moved south within Jordan perhaps hoping that they are less visible there and that restrictive policies are not implemented as strictly as in Irbid or Amman. In these places shelter is also more affordable. We received unverified reports of voluntary returnees as conditions in Jordan have become unbearable.[426] Others seek residence in camps where there more secure access to services and protection. Some people try to reach other countries, such as Turkey or Libya, and from there, to Italy or Greece, facing massive protection problems on the way.

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[421] "Syrian Refugees: Inter-Agency Regional Update."
https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=8189.
[422] In February 2015, WFP loaded the reduced one-month entitlements of JOD13 (from JOD20) per person reaching 442,021 individuals in all governorates via e-cards. In camps, WFP loaded entitlements worth JOD20 per person reaching 90,284 individuals.
[423] Feedback on draft report
[424] Interview with WFP official in Amman.
[425] UNHCR feedback on draft report
[426] WFP and UNHCR partner analysis shows that if services (mainly WFP food vouchers) are reduced, 30 to 40 percent of Syrian refugees say they will return to Syria. Only 10 percent of the respondents said they would return to the camps. Interview with WFP official in Amman, October 2014.

5.3.5 Standards

UNHCR partners report few issues in relation to standards, indicating few compromises to the quality agreed in task forces and working groups, especially in urban areas (4.4 out of 5), but less so in camps (3.8 out of 5). This may be related to the fact that despite efforts to provide appropriate shelter to all refugees, insufficient funding cause a number of refugees to still live in tents. After three years, UNHCR's minimum shelter standard in Za'atari are still tents. Even if Saudi donors donated a large number of prefab units this was not sufficient for everyone[427] and 15,000 refugees[428] spent the 2014-2015 winter at 700 meters' altitude in Za'atari under canvas, where gas heaters and an over-used electricity grid pose major fire hazards.

UNHCR reports that aside from the tents in Zaatari, all other forms of basic assistance in– core relief items, health, WASH – covered the entire population to Sphere standards almost immediately. It also admits that insecurity around distributions in early 2013 and uncoordinated activities, caused unannounced and small-scale donations of non-standard items. The problem with Sphere standards is that they are not contextualized to the needs of Syrian refugees and may not always provide dignified[429] solutions.

Non-camp conditions are far from optimal either. One-fifth of refugees who settled in urban areas live in substandard accommodation, such as emergency or temporary shelters. Although recent reports indicate that rents are now stabilizing, possibly as a result of the stagnating influx of Syrian refugees, most vulnerable refugees cannot afford the high rents for adequate shelter in urban areas. This has caused room sharing and general overcrowding in poorly maintained structures or temporary shelters, rapid depletion of family savings, increased risk of eviction, and rising tensions with host communities, leaving refugees exposed to increased protection risks.[430]

Until recently the refugee response system provided the minimum standards and refugees were able to survive with the cash provided to them. However, the already mentioned cuts and strict targeting are challenging a dignified life for hundreds of thousands of refugees in Jordan. Shelter sector partners are equally concerned about the future and report major technical gaps which need to be urgently addressed. UNHCR reports that with Za'atari now full to capacity and the encampment policies taking full effect in 2015, urgent additional camp extension works may be needed in Azraq including investments in land development, infrastructure works (electricity), construction of new basic service facilities, as well as investments for additional shelter units.[431] Za'atari too will need work on its electricity grid and improved winterization.

Given the strong correlation between livelihoods and many protection issues, and the fact that shelter is the main expense for refugees, shelter has emerged as an important entry point for addressing broader protection issues. Programmatically speaking there are opportunities to strengthen links with other sectors. In the longer term UNHCR is looking for an increase in the number of affordable housing units in the market, and secure tenure and rental contracts need to be ensured to protect the rights of refugees.[432]

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[427] Shelter Working Group Jordan (March 2015).
[428] Direct observations and UNHCR camp management briefing in Za'atari.
[429] The Sphere Handbook Humanitarian Charter asserts the right of populations to life with dignity, protection and assistance.
[430] Ibid.
[431] UNHCR, Jordan Refugee Response (September 2014).
[432] Ibid.

5.4   Conclusions and Key Challenges

The study in Jordan focused on the scope of UNHCR operationality and partnerships, responding to a context that is evolving towards:

1) shrinking protection space for refugees in Jordan, and;
2) systematically under-funded appeals, with a very uncertain future as pledges fall behind requirements.

5.4.1 Effectiveness

The RRP has been a largely effective instrument when considering its outputs. Partners confirm the perspectives of other key stakeholders and the analysis by independent consultants, an overall effective UNHCR operation. The Netherlands government contributions to the RRP helped UNHCR and partners to meet life saving needs of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees in Jordan and to effectively coordinate the response.

Partners report the implementation of all activities as agreed.[433] Not one partner reported issues about their ability to deliver outputs: distribute goods and services according to agreed targets and value this 5 out of 5. As in Lebanon, UNHCR has successfully created the conditions in terms of registration, coordination, funding and advocacy for its partners to distribute all outputs to the population as agreed in contracts. However, the difference between numbers of arrival and numbers registered mean that, until September 2013, assistance was not distributed in a timely manner, especially in urban areas. Refugees and host communities used their own resources (savings, selling off assets, volunteering, donations, mosques) to meet needs in the interim.

Partners value UNHCR's timeliness and predictability very highly, particularly in the camp settings where no further issues where reported. Partners gave timely fund disbursements in accordance with agreements a perfect score. As in Lebanon, frequent budget revisions were necessary in Jordan as the influx of refugee numbers increased rapidly in 2013. For reasons outside the scope of this evaluation, this did not lead to the sort of problems involving poor timeliness and poor predictability in partner funding and project implementation, as encountered in Lebanon.

UNHCR recognises that outputs alone will not improve refugees protection status and standards as Government policies and host community attitudes have far more influence on outcomes than protection projects, information dissemination and community support projects. UNHCR and partners are increasingly struggling to adapt their programmes to the rapidly deteriorating policy and funding environments, reflected in increasingly poor outcomes for the refugees.

These challenges are manifested by issues with standards (especially in shelter) and coverage (especially in terms of protection of those living outside camps) due to funding shortfalls and government- enforcement of restrictions to the extent that refugees are unable to legally meet their own livelihoods needs. At the same time, the costs of living (particularly due to increased rents) are soaring. Refugees are pushed into poverty and are increasingly having to cope in a way that challenges their protection and exposes them to various forms of exploitation. This is particularly affecting women and children,

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[433] The analysis is somewhat speculative as our resources only allowed us to analyse outputs. We cannot say with any degree of confidence the extent to which outcomes or impact can be attributed to any particular category of inputs (e.g. as provided under the RRP agreements).

but also (young) single men.[434] Partners are concerned that, because of funding constraints and encampment policies, programmes might continue in the camps, but services in urban areas will deteriorate sharply in 2015. According to some of partners, UNHCR and WFP are not sufficiently challenging government encampment policies, but others believe that UNHCR has been as vocal as possible, and it cannot be expected to push harder without more political leverage from donor governments.

5.4.2 Sustainability

Persistent gaps between outputs and outcomes indicate poor sustainability. The Jordanian government hosted large numbers of vulnerable Syrian refugees for more than four years at considerable costs.[435] To date, it allowed UNHCR to deliver programs covering all needs for services and protection generally at appropriate standards with some exceptions. As in Lebanon, the sustainability of the humanitarian effort in Jordan is now at immediate risk as funding is running thin and the crisis is protracting. RRP funding has been at about 60 percent in 2014 and the dependency of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees in Jordan is increasing. These shortages and resulting uncertainties act as warning signs for refugees to prepare for worse times to come.

The Jordan Response Plan (JRP) seeks to provide a planning framework for a more sustainable approach to the twin problems of refugee emergency needs and host community and government capacities to meet them.[436] Yet it is not clear exactly how the two distinct pillars will work towards a common humanitarian goal, and the framework will pose a significant challenge to some donors, as not all of them are prepared to support development activities in Jordan.[437] Although we have not seen in-depth analysis of this, there seems to be more scope for a UNHCR hand-over of coordination functions in Jordan than in Lebanon. Jordanian government institutions generally are stronger, are proactively engaged with UNHCR both in policy and implementation terms, and have a stronger track record in delivering social protection services to vulnerable groups. However, Jordanian engagement on refugee issues would more likely be from a security perspective, or representing refugees as a burden, rather than emphasising the needs and strengths of refugees. Key donor representatives such as DfID[438], acknowledged that security and economic issues take priority over refugee issues in their diplomatic efforts with host governments.

Meanwhile, refugees are driven into camps in Jordan where they live in conditions, a far cry from what they are used to in Syria, with little hope for a better future. The ones choosing to stay in the cities face increasing protection problems and poverty, which are difficult to escape from without engaging in illicit activities. Only the very desperate or the very brave try to escape from the region, which comes with its own protection concerns. Increased violence in Syria, the contracting global and regional protection space, and the drying up of resources made available for food and shelter, and the unwillingness of third countries to increase resettlement targets combined drive increasing numbers of people in the hands of people smugglers and other illicit networks, and force them to adopt negative coping strategies.

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[434] UNHCR, Jordan Refugee Response (September 2014).
[435] In its National Resilience Plan (2014-16), the Government of Jordan estimated that it required US$ 1.2 billion in 2014 to maintain existing levels of basic services, including US$ 731 million for water and sanitation, education, health, housing and other services. Cited in: IRC and NRC (November 2014).
[436] UNDP and UNHCR (2014).
[437] Possible exceptions are USAID, DEVCO, and DFiD.
[438] Interview with British Embassy staff in Amman

6. Conclusions and Policy Implications

The Syrian civil war created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in terms of scope and intensity. By the end of 2014, more than 200,000 civilians were killed and half of Syria's pre-crisis population was displaced, either within their country or abroad.

This chapter draws on the data and analysis provided in the previous chapters in order to:

1. present our key findings on the humanitarian response led by, respectively, UN-OCHA (in Syria) and the UNHCR (in the neighbouring countries);
2. explore likely scenarios for the Syrian conflict and its humanitarian consequences within Syria and in two of its neighbouring countries, Lebanon and Syria, and;
3. assess the role of and implications for Dutch humanitarian policy.

6.1 The Protracted Syrian Crisis

The Syrian conflict escalated into a protracted crisis inflicting an ever-growing toll on millions of residents and larges number of refugees in the neighbouring countries. The conflict mutated into a multi-layered war, involving an increasing number of protagonists and external actors. It also witnessed a merger of the Iraqi battlefields where armed conflicts resumed in 2014.

International diplomatic efforts to encourage a political settlement have virtually ground to a halt as external actors, especially within the UN Security Council, are sharply divided on how to end the conflict. Even if protagonists will realize the stalemate and resign to any gains from the conflict, civilians will likely continue to pay the price as chances are that their needs will go largely unaddressed.

Internationally financed humanitarian assistance will remain pertinent, for those in need within Syria and in the neighbouring countries. In the context of dwindling resources and donor fatigue, learning from the experiences to date will be essential.

6.2 Syria

UN-OCHA led UN agencies and NGOs, the IOM, and SARC were *relatively slow and unable to address all humanitarian needs of the population* of Syria for two main reasons: insufficient funding and an inability to negotiate unrestricted access with the Syrian regime.

The effects were 1) the need to prioritise lifesaving activities over recovery and resilience work, undermining the sustainability of the aid effort and 2) under-service opposition held territories.

Our analysis suggests that a complex UN-led, multi-agency response to a violent intra-state conflict and humanitarian emergency involving competing claims on sovereignty and territorial control cannot be relied on *during the acute stages of a violent conflict* involving belligerent parties with the characteristics of regimes such as the one in Damascus in order *to provide adequate humanitarian assistance in a timely manner.* Humanitarian actors largely outside the UN framework, which also maintain a reasonable level of trust of the regime (SARC) and a number of NGOs proved to be a much more effective channel at the early stages of the emergency.

Largely due to considerations to maintain workable relations with the Syrian government in Damascus, UN agencies have not sufficiently capitalized on the increased

access by way of cross-border assistance granted to them by the UN Security Council. To date, this has caused assistance to still be grossly insufficient in areas under rebel control and especially witnessing high and growing humanitarian needs. This points up to the importance of cross-border assistance via other channels that has grown but, to date, is still to reach levels to start addressing the shortcomings of the UN-led humanitarian effort within Syria.

Our analysis also demonstrates that under-funding affected humanitarian agencies' ability to address needs, undermined their operational capabilities, and reduced their negotiation position with the regime.

6.3   Lebanon and Jordan

The large influx of Syrian refugees placed a significant burden on already troubled economies, social cohesion, state institutions, and the overall political stability of Lebanon and Jordan. Like in Syria, the international humanitarian system, led by UNHCR, *scaled up relatively slowly*, to the needs of the refugees, mainly because of the time it took to establish an elaborate coordination architecture. Refugees were able to survive their initial displacement in 2011 to early 2012 using mainly their own savings and to host government institutions, communities and charities in the two countries.

Overall, *the provision and standards of humanitarian assistance were appropriate* to the needs. Cash programmes were important and appropriate as it allowed refugees to set their own priorities, but inadvertently may have added to growing tensions between host and refugee communities. Protection and shelter activities also met the most urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations. However, this is now increasingly challenged by chronic under-funding and restrictive host government policies. Reports of increasing problems with SGBV, child protection, refoulement etc. indicate rising protection concerns in both Lebanon and Jordan. Shelter remains below a standard which takes into account the dignity of the population, in particular for those who did not chose to live in informal tented settlements, but also in urban areas and, still to some extent, in the camps in Jordan.

Most stakeholders interviewed and much of the literature are positive about the way UNHCR facilitated an *effectively (but perhaps not efficiently) coordinated response* to the refugee crisis. UNHCR also *added significant value* to the work of it's partners in terms of risk management and quality assurance.

Even if *needs assessments can be improved and better coordinated*, they were a crucial contribution to the relative success of the RRP. UNHCR needs-based approach provides at least in theory a buffer against the risks of instrumentalizing humanitarian aid for political, security and trade objectives. However, this has not prevented some government officials, political actors and belligerents from perceiving the humanitarian system as a political instrument, creating space for their own (internationally uncoordinated) system, which in turn has placed unremitting challenges to UNHCR's efforts to uphold humanitarian standards.

UNHCR's mandate does not exist in a political vacuum, and it can only be implemented to the extent that donors are able or willing to fund it and prioritise its remit in diplomatic efforts in order to be sustainable. Many donors are unable to continue to make ongoing financial commitments required to maintain the relatively high standards required. Key donor representatives such as DfID, acknowledged that security and economic issues take priority over refugee issues in their diplomatic efforts with host governments. With the exception of Germany and Sweden, donor countries have not been able to muster domestic political support for substantial resettlement quotas.

Combined with host government restrictions on employment and movement this has now caused a very precarious protection and assistance environment.

The provision of comprehensive and verifiable data in order to confidently assess RRP's impact remains a weak aspect of the humanitarian effort in both countries. Even after three years of programming, most UNHCR partners found that they were only able to report on outcomes and other than that speculate about what made a real difference to the lives of the beneficiaries. Stakeholders expressed the strategic importance of impact evaluations in order to demonstrate and protect the credibility of humanitarian assistance and to inform effective programme designs.

6.4   Policy Implications

These findings may be viewed as having a number of policy implications and – suggestions for humanitarian actors and donors:

1. As the humanitarian response inside Syria demonstrated, donors need to consider complementary ways to allow for access to those in need while the UN develops coordination platforms especially at the onset of major humanitarian emergencies;

2. Donor countries should actively provide leverage to UNHCR and OCHA by prioritising humanitarian diplomacy;

3. UNHCR and other UN agencies should be enabled and requested to provide comprehensive and reliable data on project outcomes and impact evaluations in addition to perception studies and process evaluations already commissioned;

4. The protracted nature of the Syria crisis and the ongoing need for international support will require continued and increased humanitarian relief and development assistance including to host government institutions and host communities in Lebanon and Jordan. Humanitarian agencies will need to continue to focus on providing humanitarian assistance to people in need in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Resilience and other development agendas should be financed from non-humanitarian facilities such as the World Bank and UNDP programmes.

Our findings lead us to recommend Netherlands Humanitarian Policy to:

1. Consider further stepping up direct financial contributions to NGOs with a proven track record of providing cross-border assistance and primarily working from southern Turkey. Netherlands-based eligibility criteria should be removed to allow for fully international bids.

2. Support the improvement of coordination mechanisms for Damascus based UN-agencies, UN-OCHA in southern Turkey and cross-border NGOs by

   • including in tender conditionalities that NGOs involved in cross-border assistance need to actively take part in the NGO Forum in southern Turkey,
   • closely monitoring the emerging coordination framework of the HLG in Gaziantep, and use its leverage both among NGOs and UN agencies to ensure that these efforts are followed up and the coordination framework is consolidated;

3. Continue, and where possible strengthen, diplomacy in collaboration with other (European) donors to provide political leverage to UNHCR when it critically engages with officials in Lebanon and Jordan in cases where host government policies undermine the protection and livelihood status of the refugees;

4. Ensuring effective and evidence based programming and contribute to the credibility and domestic political continuity of humanitarian funding consider to make funding conditional to impact evaluations of any sizeable grant.

Our recommendations may require additional DSH capacity for contracting, programming, monitoring and reporting. DSH currently has 11 staff who manage a very large portefolio, which apart from the Syria crisis also includes a large number of protracted crises, major emergencies, and natural disasters elsewhere in the world. For the Netherlands to have an effective humanitarian policy, additional staff will ensure that the full range of existing funding channels are better used in order to maximise the relative strength of each.

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Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

Contents

Introduction

The 2014 evaluation programming of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs includes the policy evaluation of the Netherlands' Humanitarian Assistance. The evaluation department of the ministry, IOB, is responsible for the implementation of the evaluation. The set-up of this evaluation envisages three country-case studies that will be conducted in the period and will concern the Common Humanitarian Fund in Sudan, the Syria Regional Response and the Human Response Fund Drought Crisis in Ethiopia. These studies allow for a more in-depth study about the expected improvements in HA delivery at country-level and its effectiveness.

These Terms of Reference concern the assignment for the case study on the Syrian crisis.

Background information on the Netherlands HA policy and the evaluation

Background information on the Netherlands HA policy

The overall objective of Dutch humanitarian assistance is to contribute to the relief of life-threatening human needs amongst the most vulnerable people, mostly women and children, caused by (chronic) crisis situations and/or natural disasters. In principle, the Netherlands provides humanitarian assistance throughout the world with a focus on chronic crisis areas in the developing world. The basic principles underlying Dutch humanitarian assistance are the humanitarian imperative (assistance is provided wherever the needs are most urgent), neutrality, impartiality and independence.

In 2011 a policy document was drawn up to outline how the Netherlands acts upon lessons learned in recent years in order to respond to new developments and challenges.[439] In this policy document the following goals were prioritized:

1. *More self-reliance and resilience*
   In the case of humanitarian aid, prioritising and strengthening the use of local capacity and structures. More attention will be devoted to disaster risk reduction (DRR): preventing disasters, mitigating the impact of disasters, and disaster preparedness.

2. *More effectiveness through less duplication and more coordination*
   Emergency appeals need to become more uniform, so that they are mutually comparable and better coordinated. At present, each aid organisation operates its own system, which is inefficient. More cooperation in needs assessments will ensure more cohesion, less duplication, and fewer gaps in aid provision.

3. *Humanitarian access and neutrality*
   Aid organisations must have free access to the people affected. The humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence must be upheld. This protects humanitarian aid from being equated with politics and from the potential risks this brings for both victims and aid workers. The Netherlands wants to be an active advocate in this area.

4. *Greater accountability*
   The Netherlands will continue to focus on accountability for results in humanitarian aid. Furthermore, the government has a role in ensuring adequate communication towards the Dutch public on the results of the humanitarian assistance provided.

The policy document includes four to six commitments for the realisation of each of the four goals.

The Netherlands does not implement humanitarian aid directly but, as a donor, enables humanitarian organisations to do so. Dutch policy emphasises the importance of a strong central coordinating role of the UN in humanitarian crisis situations. For reasons of assumed efficiency, the Netherlands in principle prefers the UN channel for humanitarian assistance and only channels funding through NGOs in cases where this is not possible.

The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP), led by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), guides Dutch humanitarian action in countries and regions characterised by chronic crises. In case of an acute crisis situation, this applies to the Emergency Appeals of the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The Netherlands sees itself as a partner in the global humanitarian system, with a global portfolio – and thus it focuses its attention on improving that global system. The Netherlands provides flexible funding, with the vast majority of its contributions to UN agencies and the ICRC being either

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[439] Staatssecretaris van Buitenlandse Zaken, Hulp aan Mensen in Nood, 23 december 2011, Kamerstuk 32605 nr. 64.

wholly, or partially, unearmarked and it is a timely donor, aiming to commit 75% of the annual humanitarian budget before the end of April each year. In return for these good humanitarian donorship practices, the Netherlands asks the humanitarian system to implement the full range of its planned reforms, to further strengthen the capacity of UN leadership, and for all involved agencies to coordinate under the cluster system. All these forms of aid are subject to international agreements and principles, especially the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles, which largely determine Dutch policy choices.

In the period 2009-2012 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spent a total of EUR 1.1 billion on humanitarian assistance[440]. Since 2009 the annual expenditure has slowly decreased from EUR 293 million to EUR 258 million in 2012.[441] Furthermore, the Netherlands funded EU humanitarian assistance through its ODA contribution to the EU institutions. The *Global Humanitarian Assistance* report estimates the contribution to have been EUR 71 million in 2012, thus adding a substantial amount to the humanitarian assistance funded through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[442]

2.2 Background information on the evaluation of Dutch Humanitarian Assistance

The objective of the evaluation is to render account for the policy by providing insight into the Netherlands' HA policy development, its implementation and whether the envisaged results were achieved. It also aims to provide lessons learned from experiences of the implementation of HA, particularly with regard to adaption of the Netherlands' policy to the rapidly changing contexts in which HA is provided.

The central evaluation question is: to what extent has the central objective of the Netherlands' humanitarian assistance policy, i.e. to provide humanitarian assistance in an effective way, been realised?

The approach envisages three main activities:

    a) Assessment of the policy relevance
    b) A systematic review of available literature and evaluation reports to gain more insight into the extent to which the expected improvements in HA delivery have been realised and in particular what progress has been made on the implementation of the HA reform agenda.
    c) Three country studies (on the Common Humanitarian Fund in Sudan, the Syria Regional Response and the Human Response Fund Drought Crisis in Ethiopia) for a more in-depth study about the expected improvements in HA delivery at country-level and its effectiveness.

The evaluation research will focus on the last five years (2009-2013) and will be updated for the first half of 2014 when relevant.

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[440] This is spending allocated through the six budget articles for humanitarian aid, namely: UNHCR, UNRWA, WFP, emergency aid to developing countries, emergency aid to non-OECD/DAC countries, disaster risk reduction.
[441] For 2013 the total indicative budget was set at 215 million.
[442] Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013; correspondence with authors.

The planning envisages the implementation of the desk studies and country studies: between September and December. The draft report will be submitted on 31 January 2015. The final report will be completed no later than 28 February 2015.

Background information on the Syria crisis humanitarian response

Context/crisis

As the conflict in Syria enters its fourth year, insecurity, violence, and specific persecution continue to force the people of Syria to seek safety and protection elsewhere. The result of the ongoing crisis is further massive population displacement and growing humanitarian needs. The UN estimates that 6.5 million people are internally displaced and a total of 9.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, 46% of whom are children. These figures include at least 270,000 of the 540,000 registered Palestine refugees who have also been displaced within Syria. The Syrian refugee population has grown from 200,000 in 2012 to over 2.5 million in February 2014. Most of them are hosted in Lebanon (944,000), Turkey (619,000), Jordan (577,000) and Iraq (230,000). As of the end of January 2014, over 3 million people were estimated to be living in hard to reach areas being besieged by either the Government of Syria or opposition forces (OCHA Humanitarian Bulletin, Syrian Arab Republic Issue, January 31, 2014).

Humanitarian Assistance

The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) now renamed the Strategic Response, is being administered through UN OCHA. The Strategic Response provides assistance within Syria as well as to neighboring countries that are dealing with the refugee influx. For the response in Syria the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (SHARP) received $US 1 billion, for the assistance to neighboring countries the Syria Regional Response Plan (SRP) received $US 2 billion. Major donors are the USA ($US 1.16 billion), the EU ($US 732 million) the UK ($US 381 million), Kuwait ($US 344 million) and Germany ($US 312 million). Funding requirements as pledged in the Kuwait Pledging Conference totaled $US 6.5 billion: $US 2,27 billion for inside Syria through SHARP and $US 4,2 billion for the regional response through SRP.

Humanitarian assistance within Syria through SHARP

The Government of Syria restricts humanitarian access and the humanitarian organizations' ability to operate. Cross-border access to deliver humanitarian assistance from neighboring countries to opposition areas requires the agreement and cooperation of the Syrian authorities. Several NGOs and other independent aid agencies provide cross-border aid from neighboring countries without Syria's consent. The international Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) works with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) to provide assistance to IDPs and other victims of the conflict in Syria.

UN agencies and 12 international NGOs have been authorized by the Government of Syria to work with SARC. The humanitarian assistance is

constrained by a number of factors, including insecurity and conflict and constraint for humanitarian organizations to get access to the affected population in Syria. In October 2013, the UN Security Council issued a Presidential Statement urging Syrian authorities 'to facilitate the expansion of humanitarian relief operations and lift bureaucratic impediments and other obstacles in Syria'.

The 2014 SHARP response plan identifies 5 overarching strategic objectives:

1. Advocate for the protection of civilians, in particular those with specific vulnerabilities and prioritize their needs in accordance with principles of international law, international humanitarian and human rights law.
2. Increase the provision of appropriate life-saving emergency services and relief supplies for affected people in Syria, especially in the sectors of food and agriculture, water, sanitation, health, nutrition, shelter, education and essential non-food items.
3. Expand early recovery and restoration/stabilization of livelihoods, supporting the rehabilitation of vital public services affected by the crisis and creating an environment for humanitarian assistance to enhance the resilience of affected communities.
4. Enhance the operational capacity of national and international humanitarian responders and support existing local and community coping mechanisms.
5. Ensure adequate levels of preparedness to respond to further emerging humanitarian needs.

In consultation with concerned line ministries and SARC, UN agencies, IOM and INGOs have identified critical activities to be undertaken across the 14 governorates in order to strengthen complementarities and further upscale programming.

UN agencies, IOM and INGOs working under the SHARP 2014 seek US$ $2.27 billion through 122 projects to respond to an estimated 9.3 million people across the country who are in need of critical life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection. As of 15 December 2013, SHARP 2013 has received 74 percent of requirements or a net sum of $1.046 billion, out of the total funding requirement of $1.4 billion

Humanitarian assistance in the neighboring countries: The Syria Regional Response Plan (RRP)

UNHCR leads efforts to provide assistance to Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, including non-food items such as shelter and cash assistance. UNOCHA estimated that the majority of Syrian refugees (more than 80%) are living outside camps, mostly in urban settings.

The RRP addresses three specific target populations: refugees in fixed settlements like camps; refugees living outside camp settlements; and host communities. The Plan envisages a coordinated response to the needs of new arrivals, clearer assessments of vulnerability among the existing refugee

populations, and attempts to address the most immediate local priorities such as waste management, water supply, small scale reconstruction and health service delivery. An important component of the 2014 RRP is to strengthen local service delivery and resilience, thereby promoting social cohesion and enhancing refugee and host community protection. Although limited in its intended scope and duration, the RRP 2014 is designed to complement longer-term development interventions upon which stabilization processes in the region will largely depend.

The strategic objectives are as follows:

- At least 4.1 million refugees have equitable access to effective protection, including access to territory.

-The most vulnerable refugees are accommodated in organized refugee settlements.

-The most vulnerable host communities benefit from improved access to essential services and access to livelihood opportunities.

-The targeting and planning of long-term national aid programs is informed by structured dialogue and the timely provision of inter-agency assessment information of quality on refugees and host communities.

-Refugees will benefit from the early planning for longer-term durable solutions strategy in accordance with international law.

The RRP will address three target groups: refugees in camps; refugees residing outside camps; and host communities. More than 4 million refugees and 2.7 million people from host communities will benefit from this plan.

Background information on the Netherlands support to the Syrian crisis

The political response

The European Union (EU) imposed economic sanctions, including an arms embargo, visa ban and asset freeze, against the Syrian regime in May 2011, and has heightened the sanctions periodically since then. In November 2012 the EU recognized the National Coalition of the Syrian Opposition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, and subsequently released a statement calling for Assad to step down to allow for political transition in January 2013. In March 2013 the EU foreign ministers modified these sanctions, making it possible for European governments to bypass the ban on providing "non-lethal" supplies to the opposition. On 28 May 2013, the European States effectively ended the arms embargo on the opposition in Syria and opened up the possibility to arm anti-government rebels while upholding the arms embargo on the Assad government. The majority of the remaining EU member-states have expressed their concerns that further militarization will only fuel more violence. On 15 March 2014, EU High Representative, Ashton, expressed her concern about reports which "confirmed the regime's indiscriminate use of murder, torture, rape, hostage-taking, and sexual violence. These are crimes against

humanity, war crimes and blatant breaches of international human rights and humanitarian law."

Dutch contributions

Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011 the Netherlands contributed EUR 83,5 million (as per 10th of June), mainly through the above mentioned SHARP (EUR 15 million) and RRP (EUR 31.5 million). In November and December 2013 additional contributions were made to UNHCR (EUR 17 million) and the WFP (EUR 2 million). In January 2014, the Netherlands committed EUR 6 million at the Kuwait Pledging Conference. By far the largest contributions are channeled through UNHCR which is cluster leader for protection, cash & non-food items, and shelter. Other contributions have been made to UNRWA, WFP and IFRC. Furthermore a subsidy framework has been launched for cross border aid by Dutch NGOs (EUR 7 million).

The main contributions are recapitulated in the following table:

Main recipients HA Syria crisis 2012-2014 (till June 10)

Programme/organization	EUR
UNHCR	39.0
Netherlands Red Cross/IFRC	10,5
Cross border aid by Dutch NGOs	7.0
WFP	4.0
UNICEF	3,5
UNRWA	2,5
Others	17,0
Total	83,5

According to a recent overview of international humanitarian assistance, donor assistance between 2012- and February of 2014 totaled US$ 6,163 million. The Netherlands ranks 14th in the list of International Humanitarian Country Donors to the Syria Crisis, 2012-2014 (In this inventory, the Netherlands' contribution till February 2014 was US 76.3 million). [443]

Next to the regionally earmarked contributions non earmarked contributions to the humanitarian UN organizations and more specifically to CERF and ICRC have also partly been designated to the crisis in Syria. For 2014 these contributions have been estimated as follows:

Organization	EUR (mil)
UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)	40 (app. 10% of the total CERF-budget)
ICRC	25
WFP	36

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[443] Margesson, R and Chesser,S. (2014) Syria: Overview of the Humanitarian Response. Washington: Congressional Research Service

| UNHCR | 33 |
| UNRWA | 13 |

The consultancy

At the end of the assignment, the consultancy is expected to have produced:

1. a country report on the Syrian crisis of maximum 70 pages (excluding annexes)
2. a draft chapter for the overall policy evaluation report of maximum 15 pages that, to a large extent will be a summary of the country report.

The above products are expected to reflect the answers to the following research questions and issues.

Main research questions and issues:

1. ***What assessment can be made of the relevance of Dutch HA policy regarding the Syrian crisis?***
   a) What assessment can be made of the conditions and dilemmas for HA (political, access and others) and how has the Netherlands responded (also in a broader context of bilateral and EU political and diplomatic efforts)?
   b) What assessment can be made of Dutch HA funding policy regarding the Syria crisis: what considerations determined the distribution of funds and the choice of channels and how well was assistance monitored?
   c) What assessment can be made of the decision-making process to channel cross-border aid through Dutch NGOs and the subsidy framework?

2. **To what extent did the supported UN HA strategy respond to the main characteristics and challenges of this crisis and its context?**

   a) Assessment of the relevance of SHARP and SRP: how did both programs respond to the main characteristics and challenges of the context/crisis in Syria and neighboring countries?
   b) To what extent were the UN organizations successful in getting access to the affected population?
   c) To what extent did the Humanitarian Response take into account the specific characteristics and conditions of the target population and was it able to effectively identify vulnerable groups? What were the quality and timeliness of the need-assessment system?

3. ***Have the expected improvements of HA delivery through the multilateral channel been achieved?***
   a) What assessment can be made of the coordination arrangements and more specifically of UNHCR's role in the response?
   b) How has the agenda on HA UN reform (cluster approach, role of Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA) been put into practice and how did this influence the capacity to deliver HA?
   c) To what extent did SHARP and RRP achieve their goals to support the timely allocation and disbursement of donor resources to the most critical humanitarian needs of Syrian victims of the crisis?
   d) What assessment can be made of the alignment of the humanitarian response to government policy in the neighboring countries?
   e) How well were UNHCR and other supported organizations able to adapt their responses to the rapidly changing situation in Syria and the neighboring countries and transformation from an acute crisis into a more protracted one?
   f) How well were considerations on cost effectiveness and sustainability incorporated into the response?

g) Information management/monitoring and reporting: what assessment can be made of the quality to report and monitor the activities?

4. What assessment can be made of the effectiveness of supported HA interventions and to what extent did the expected improvements in aid delivery contribute to (better conditions for) effective HA?
a) To what extent did SHARP and RRP achieve their goals in responding to needs of the affected population in the fields of protection, shelter and income?
b) To what extent did SHARP and RRP achieve their goals in responding to the protection of vulnerable groups (women and children)?
c) To what extent were the longer term objectives relating to sustainability and resilience achieved in the case of RRP?

NB: Due to the difficulty of conducting field work in Syria, an assessment of SHARP will most likely have to be based on available literature. The focus of question 4 may therefore be on RRP.

5. To what extent did IFRC and the supported Dutch NGOs meet the expectations as regards to access to specific population groups (cross border/non registered refugees) and HA effectiveness?
a) What assessment can be made of the effectiveness of the supported programs of IFRC and the expected advantages of working with the national organizations affiliated at IFRC?
b) To what extent were the objectives of cross border aid through Dutch NGO's achieved? Have these organizations proven to be capable to deliver cross border aid? How do their capabilities compare to other, international, regional and Syrian aid providers? Do their activities complement other humanitarian organizations' efforts?

Evaluation framework

For this country-study a more specific evaluation-framework will be developed on the basis of the program description of SHARP and RRP. In the case of IFRC the objectives of the supported programs will be an important reference and in the case of the Dutch NGOs this will be the Subsidy Framework for Cross Border Aid.

Since the results of the country studies will be integrated into the general analysis and final overview report of the Netherlands' HA policy, it is important that the country studies are guided by a common framework.

Hence;

a) The ToR for the HA policy evaluation (Appendix 8) includes a list of the minimum indicators and sub-questions as well as the relevant sources for information which will also form the point of departure for this study.
b) The consultant contracted for conducting the general literature review and the overview report (see general ToR – Appendix 9) will make suggestions and comment on the research proposal as well on the draft report.

Research activities

To answer these research questions, the consultant is expected to undertake the following activities.

For each of the activities a first indication of the amount of time and resources to be spent has been indicated as a percentage of total resources available.

a) Analysis of Dutch/EU policy as regards to the Syrian crisis (10%)

An inventory will be made of the evolution of the Netherlands and the EU political and diplomatic position in the Syrian crisis. The assessment of the political and diplomatic contributions will be done against findings of the international literature and discussions on the role of the EU in the Syrian crisis. The main focus of interest is how the political and diplomatic activities influenced the conditions for HA.

Therefore the following activities are envisaged:

a) A review of relevant documents and literature

b) Interviews to be conducted with relevant staff officials of the Netherlands ministry and Embassies in the neighboring countries, relevant EU staff members as well as other key informants.

c) Brief paper with main findings and discussion points.

IOB will provide the necessary information on the Netherlands' policy and facilitate the contacts with relevant ministry staff.

b) Desk study for context analysis (10%)

In order to answer the questions on the relevance of the supported UN HA strategy in the Syrian crisis a desk study will be conducted on the context of the crisis.

The desk study will consist of a comparative analysis of academic and other current literature/information on the region/crisis concerned and the HA strategy. It will attempt to analyze how the humanitarian assistance responded to the main challenges and to what extent the assistance is in line with the main characteristics of the crisis and situation. Additionally interviews will be conducted with relevant staff members of HA organizations, academics and government representatives in the neighboring countries.

c) Desk study of HA delivery and results of projects and programs funded by the Netherlands (25%)

The desk study will focus on the strategy and results of the main programs that were supported by the Netherlands: SHARP and RRP and on the role of UNHCR and OCHA/CERF in the Syria crisis. As stated above, the Netherlands is a major contributor to ICRC and therefore a review of the documentation on its role will also be included.

After a first screening and inventory of the available sources an assessment framework will be developed for the systematic review of current literature, progress reports and evaluation reports. The review approach should include a methodology for assessing the quality of the reports, especially to assess to what extent the findings have been substantiated.

Because of the rapid changes in the situation and the permanent changes in the planning and programming of the HA, it is to be expected that the available

documentation and reports will have serious limitations as regards to coverage, data collection and evidence. It is obvious that this will also influence the possibilities to respond to the evaluation questions.

Therefore it is important to observe that almost simultaneously to this study, two evaluations of UNHCR are taking place, which could provide additional information:

- The Independent program evaluation of UNHCR and its partners to the on-going emergency influx of refugees from Syria

This evaluation will assess the extent to which objectives have been met and the effectiveness of UNHCR's protection and assistance programs. Special attention will be paid to the coordination arrangements. The purpose of the evaluation is learning and accountability. Key questions to be addressed will be what impact has been secured for beneficiaries, how effectively allocated funds were spent, and which actors in the project design and implementation led to optimal results. The evaluation will focus on the operations in Jordan and Lebanon. The methodology to be applied includes a document and literature review of UNHCR' program and protection documentation, interviews with key stakeholders and where possible surveys. Two parallel field visits will be undertaken to Jordan and Lebanon. The final draft of the report is expected to be available by August 2014.

- UNHCR Development Effectiveness Review

The Development Effectiveness Reviews (DER) is a systematic and structured meta-synthesis of the findings of a sample of evaluations performed by the organization itself. In order to limit the burden on the organization under review, a set of key corporate documents is reviewed and selective interviews are held with staff at headquarters level. The review of UNHCR will be set up by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Development Evaluation Division of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD), in close collaboration with UNHCR's Evaluation Service. The actual work of the DER for UNHCR will be conducted by a team of independent evaluation/development experts contracted through competitive bidding. The review will cover the period 2008 – 2014 and entails in essence conducting a systematic synthesis of information from available evaluations from UNHCR.

The review will take approximately four months starting on 1 September 2014 until December 2014.

Though both studies will not be completed before October/November, it should be attempted to benefit from the intermediate results of both studies as much as possible for the literature as well as for the planning of the field study.

d) *Field study (45%)*

A field study in Lebanon and Jordan will be conducted with two objectives:

1) To collect complementary information through interviews and consultations on specific issues resulting from the literature review.

2) To gather more extensive field-evidence for a limited number of areas and assisted population.
3) To gather more insight into the relevance and effectiveness of the supported activities of the IFRC and if possible of the activities of the Dutch NGO's, especially in the area of cross-border aid.

The approach could involve conducting two case-studies at sub-regional or local level in order to make an assessment on how the coordination at that level develops and to evaluate the effectiveness of HA in limited geographical settings. For budget and practical reasons it might be necessary to conduct the two field studies in one single country.

The methodology and further specification will be elaborated simultaneously with the implementation of the desk-study and is also dependent on the results of the necessary consultations with UNHCR and other organizations.

It is possible that for the evaluation of the Cross Border Aid of Dutch NGO's a short trip to Turkey will have to be included.

e) Writing up: final report and report chapter (10%)

Planning

The research will be carried out as much as possible in the second half of 2014.

It will start with an inception phase (3-4 days) in which a work plan will be elaborated. This work plan will consist of a more detailed overview of the approach to be followed, activities to be undertaken and the planning.

After approval of the work plan by IOB the literature review will be implemented and simultaneously the approach and methodology for the field research will be developed. The field research proposal will also need approval by IOB.

The draft final report will be submitted on January 31, 2015.

The comments of the organizations concerned, IOB (and the reference group) will be processed in February. A more detailed schedule should be included in the work plan.

IOB realizes that the planning will be dependent on the realistic possibilities of conducting field work. At all times IOB and the consultant will remain in close communication about the planning and any unexpected delays.

Organization

The consultant will coordinate his/her activities closely with IOB and possible changes in the planning and activities will be presented to IOB for approval.

IOB will be responsible for introducing the consultants to the organizations concerned and provide them with relevant information on the Netherlands policy.

Products

As described above, the final products to be delivered by the consultant are:

a) A country report of maximum 70 pages;
b) A draft chapter for the final report according to the report framework which to a large extent will be a summary of the country report, maximum 15 pages.

Appendix 2: Partner Interview Tool

Type of UNHCR partner: UN/NGO/INGO/Govt./Private/Other
Sector (include Multi):
Location:
Number of months programming within the RRP framework:
Number of RRP grants:
% of overall budget comes from UNHRC:

Line of Questioning (rating out of 5 and issues)

Programme Effectiveness
1. What is the sectoral focus of your programme (activities, objectives)
2. Globally, how do you rate the results of your programme? (output/outcome)
3. What if any operational standards apply to your programme?
4. On a scale of 5: to what extend have you been able to apply them and to what extend are they achieved?

Coverage
5. On a scale of 5: How well does the sector cover all people of concern? (   )
6. Can you estimate a percentage?
7. What are the issues here? (lack of funding, security etc.)

Needs Assessments and Monitoring
8. On a scale of 5: How do you rate UNHRC needs assessments? (   )
9. What are the issues here (elaborate on accuracy and usefulness)
10. On a scale of 5: How do you rate UNHCR monitoring information? (   )
11. What are the issues here (elaborate on accuracy, information sources, usefulness)

Timeliness and predictability
1. On a scale of 5: How do you rate the timeliness of UNHCR funds transfers (   )
2. What are the issues here? (elaborate administrative reqmnts, system performance, cash-flow issues etc.)
3. What if any, are the implications of this for your programme?

Coordination
1. In which coordination meetings do you participate?
2. Do you participate in the sectoral working group?
3. How often do you meet?
4. Do all key actors participate? If not, who is missing and why?
5. Do all important actors send the right level of staff?
6. How do these meetings add value to your programme?
7. In what way do they facilitate the achievement of objectives and standards?

Out of 5: How do you rate the usefulness of the coordination meetings? (   )

Appendix 3: Partner Profiles
Tyre partners

<u>**Protection**</u>

The protection sector covers work in protection monitoring, assistance to people with special needs (PWSM), SGBV, Child Protection, mental health, empowerment activities, legal counselling and legal awareness.[444]   We spoke to three of UNHCR protection partners in Tyre: Sheild, Intersos and Mercy Corps.

Sheild is a Lebanese development NGO working in South Lebanon, Biqa' and Akkar. It gets direct funding from UN agencies, INGOs and from donors among whom the Netherlands Embassy for some of its development work. It extends support services to people with special needs, such as the elderly, women headed households, or people with a disability. Sheild also implements an empowerment programme (GBV sensitisation) and an unconditional cash grant, which benefits from its knowledge acquired in protection work. Staff seem to have a detailed understanding of vulnerable people's locations and their socio-economic challenges.

Intersos is an Italian NGO established in 1992, with an annual turnover of €22 million. Its Lebanon programme is about €1.4 million, mostly funded by the Italian Embassy[445]. Intersos came to Lebanon with Italian government funding after the 2006 war with Israel. UNIFIL, the UN monitoring force, is under Italian command and has a substantial Italian contingent on the ground in South Lebanon. Intersos describes itself as humanitarian organization and specialises in protection work, mainly in empowerment, monitoring, SGBV and child protection. It also participates in the UNHCR coordinated shelter programme in Tyre.

Mercy Corps is an American NGO with a global operating budget in excess of US$ 320 million.[446] It works in "places of transition" and in Lebanon since 1993, engaging in a wide range of sectors such as shelter, WASH, NFIs, and mental health. In the south its focus is on monitoring, child protection and referral to more specialised agencies (e.g legal partners).
<u>**Shelter**</u>

The shelter sector in the South has collective shelter, upgrading and cash for shelter components[447]. We spoke to CISP, NRC and Intersos.

CISP was established in 1983, and like Intersos has its head office in Rome. Its 2013 global turnover was over €16 million.[448] Its origins are in peace work and it partners closely with the OVSE, which funds over 50 percent of its costs. It started working in Lebanon in 1995 and now implements collective shelter and waterproofing components. CISP also receives substantial direct support from ECHO, but in Tyre is fully funded by UNHCR. It regards itself as an implementer of UNHCR's grant and its technical rehabilitation work seemed a little at odds with its peace and governance core business. During our visit of one the collective shelters in Tyre, we observed that the

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[444] UNICEF, Lebanon Government and UNHCR (n.d.).
[445] Intersos (n.d.).
[446] Mercy Corps (n.d.), *Annual Report 2013*,
http://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/Mercy_Corps_2013_Annual_Report.pdf
[447] Habitat, Lebanon Government and UNHCR (April 2014).
[448] Comitato Internazionale Per Lo Sviluppo Dei Popoli (27 May 2013).

refugees seemed to be more familiar with the UNHCR staffer accompanying us, directing all communication at her. CISP also implements a cash for shelter grant.

Norwegian Refugee Council **(NRC)** is a very large Norwegian NGO working in shelter, protection (counselling and legal assistance), education and WASH. It has Offices in Beirut, Qubayat, Zahle, Saadnayel, Tripoli, Tyre, employs 440 staff with a total Lebanon budget of US$ 27 million,[449] funded by DFATD, DFID, ECHO, EU, NMFA, SIDA, UNHCR, UNICEF. Its shelter programme RRP component in Lebanon is US$11.9 million.[450] It is the main provider of shelter solutions to refugees arriving in Lebanon from Syria. NRC upgrades and rehabilitates existing homes and buildings. It also provide heating stoves, fuel coupons and other items to help Lebanese families who are hosting and supporting refugees. NRC also provides shelter services in Palestinian refugees living in camps and "gatherings."[451] In Tyre it rehabilitates single shelter units, 30 percent funded by UNHCR. It is also the second largest protection NGO and attracts over US$ 4.5 million direct RRP funding.

Intersos also rehabilitates single shelter units and its component is 70 percent funded by UNHCR. It uses its protection expertise by actively identifying vulnerable people in its shelter programming and refers them to protection activities.

Unconditional Cash Programming partners

We also spoke to three partners who implement UNHCR's UCAP pogramme: SOLIDAR, CISP, and Sheild.

Solidar is a Swiss development NGO whose core business is to campaign for better labour conditions in 12 countries. It started working in Lebanon in 2012 and established a presence in 2013. Its operating budget in Lebanon is CHF 1.2 million,[452] US$ 1 million of which come from the RRP and includes funding for its shelter work. Its UCAP and core relief items budget in Tyre (and the Biqa' Valley) is only partially funded by UNHCR (US$ 330,000 of which direct RRP funding) as the remaining costs are covered by Swiss Solidarity and Volkshilfe Austria. It describes itself as implementing "on behalf of" UNHCR.[453]

Sheild implemented cash for rent and food vouchers in 2013 and changed its approach when UNHCR introduced unconditional cash programming in 2014. Like Solidar it beliefs this has tremendous benefits in terms of efficiency and flexibility for the refugees, empowering them to spent money on items they really need, giving them a choice.

CISP started to implement winterization activities (heater fuel vouchers) through its shelter activities and like Sheild changed its approach in 2014 to UCAP when this became the agreed modality within the UNHCR funded programme.

Tripoli partners

In Tripoli opportunities to talk to partners and refugees were limited by security incidents in the city, which curtailed our movements somewhat. We managed to speak to five partners, four of whom from the protection sector and one participating in the

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[449] NRC (15 October 2014).
[450] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).
[451] NRC (15 October 2014).
[452] SolidarMed (n.d.).
[453] http://www.solidar.ch/humanitarian-aid-for-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon.html

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UCAP programme. We also visited a small informal settlement on the outskirts of the city, where we observed the shelter conditions, accompanied by Save the Children.

UCAP Partner

Handicap International (**HI**)is an operational UCAP partner in Tripoli, and not funded by UNHCR or through the RRP. Its main donors for Lebanon activities include ECHO, WFP, OCHA, Swiss Development Aid, Swiss Solidarity, CIDA The City of Paris, the region of Rhone Alpes, and the German and French Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Its core business is (advocacy for) demining and care for the survivors of landmine accidents and other people with disabilities. Handicap International mainly refers is beneficiaries, who are among the most vulnerable[454] to the UNHCR UCAP programme.

Protection Partners

We spoke to four of UNHCR protection partners in Tripoli: Solidarites, DRC, IRC and IRD.

Solidarités International (**SI**) is a French NGO with a 2013 global budget of just over €77 million.[455] In Lebanon it is mainly active in the shelter and food sectors. It received a total of over US$ 5.5 million in 2014.[456] However its UCAP activities are funded wholly by ECHO. At the time of the interview they had only just begun to distribute US$ 175 unconditional cash per month to 450 families and they are looking to expand activities with DfID funding in 2015.

Danish Refugee Council (**DRC**) is one of the most prolific NGOs in Lebanon. It is a (30) member organisation with an overall turn over of DKK 2.2 billion (€295 million) in 2013.[457] It started to work in Lebanon since 2004 and employs almost as many staff in Lebanon as UNHCR; as of April 2014, 572 local and international staff in Beirut, and the five field offices in Akkar, Tripoli, Baalbek, Zahle, and Tyre.[458] Its Lebanon donors include ECHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, SDC, World Bank, BPRM and DANIDA. Its overall RRP Lebanon component is US$ 30.8 million, making it the largest RRP funded NGO. Its protection activities include monitoring, empowerment of and support to PWSN, gender and SGBV. It is also active in the food security (directly supported by WFP, no RRP funding), shelter (US$ 2.6 million RRP funding), basic needs (US$ 15.6 million RRP), and social cohesion and livelihoods (US$ 3 million RRP) sectors.[459]

International Rescue Committee **(IRC)** is one of the largest US humanitarian NGOs with global operating expenses of over US$ 450 million in 2013.[460] It is also one of the major operators in Lebanon. Its protection activities include monitoring, legal assistance, empowerment and outreach, PWSN, gender (women's centres and cash), SGBV. Its protection activities are RRP funded to the tune of almost US$ 5.5 million, making it the largest recipient if RRP protection funding after UNHCR (US$ 69 million) and UNICEF (US$ 35 million).[461] It also participates in the RRP funded education, and livelihoods sectors. IRC has recently signed a strategic partnership agreement with Stichting

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[454] According to a Handicap International/Help Age assessment: 25.9 percent of Syrian refugees have an impairment. Help Age International and Handicap International (2014).
[455] Solidarites International (n.d.).
[456] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).
[457] including CARE Denmark, Amnesty International, UNICEF Denmark
[458] http://drc.dk/relief-work/where-we-work/middle-east/lebanon/
[459] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).
[460] KPMG (30 September 2013).
[461] UNHCR (n.d.) (b) .

Vluchteling, from which it receives over US$ 50 million in 2013 for its global programme.[462]

International Relief and Development **(IRD)** is a US based agency specialising in legal aid and entrepreneurship and began working in Lebanon in 2006, providing assistance to poor rural households in the south affected by the war with Israel.[463] Its protection activities within the RRP framework are UNHCR funded and include community based protection and empowerment. Birth registration, marriage registration and legal protection services, including protection from gender-based violence are provided by a legal team in Akkar and Tripoli.

UNHCR partners interviewed in Jordan

Non-camp partners Protection

The **Family Protection Department** of the Government of Jordan, as a police department, falls under the public security directorate. It is a child protection partner funded by MoPIC. It follows up on child protection and other family protection issues, when partners refer suspected legal cases.

IRC is one of the largest humanitarian US NGOs.[464] In Jordan IRC implements SGBV, child protection, community empowerment and psychosocial services activities.[465] It opened a satellite office in Mafraq in order to be more proximate to the 85% of Syrian who settled in urban areas near the border. It operates three women's centres in urban areas where it provides emotional support, pre- and post-natal care, and tangible aid such as clothing, hygiene supplies, and financial support. It received US$ 9.15 million directly from the RRP, and 50% of the remainder of its funding through UNICEF, making it one of the most important protection partners for both UNHCR and UNICEF. It is a large player in reproductive health (GBV) and other health activities (with over US$ 4 million of RRP funding). IRC opened in June 2012 two primary health care clinics in Mafraq and Ramtha where a combined average of 100 patients visit every day.

Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (**ARDD**[466]) is a Jordanian legal aid organization. It receives no direct RRP funding. 75% of its budget is covered by UNHCR and the rest is funded by ECHO, Embassy of France, CIDA, Oxfam GB and the Netherlands Embassy. ARDD focuses on women and includes a strong advocacy element in its strategy.

Intersos is an Italian NGO[467] who came to Jordan in 2012 and like many of the early arrivals started to work in Za'atari. It ended its operations in Za'atari and now focusses completely on non-camp refugees. Its work includes child protection (psychosocial support, recreational activities and therapy, funded by UNICEF and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and does not have UNHCR funding. It is also involved in shelter and unconditional cash assistance.[468]

Non-camp Shelter

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[462] KPMG (30 September 2013).
[463] http://www.ird.org/our-work/by-region/middle-east/lebanon#sthash.EzGOWIdV.dpuf
[464] see Lebanon section for more background.
[465] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).
[466] See more at: http://ardd-jo.org/mission-and-vision#sthash.HcjGUbLg.dpuf
[467] See Lebanon section of this report.
[468] http://intersos.org/en/countries/asia-and-middle-east/giordania/jordan-0

Premiere Urgence – Aide Medicale Internationale (**PU-AMI**), although a non-camp shelter partner, is a French humanitarian organization that has a strong integrated multi-sector approach. It operates on a global budget of over €15 million. In Jordan it works across the cash (RRP US$ 1.9 million), health (RRP US$ 630,000), shelter (RRP US$ 355,000), NFI (RRP US$ 14,000) food security, and wash sectors in an integrated way. Its shelter work is funded by ECHO and French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. PU-AMI does not implement a UNHCR grant.

NRC is the largest Norwegian NGO.[469] In Jordan it employs 363 national staff and 19 internationals and reaches 370,000 refugees with a total budget of 40,6 million US$ (2014); 24.5 million through the RRP. Its donors in Jordan include BPRM, DfID, DFATD, ECHO, NMFA, SIDA, UNICEF, UNHCR. It has offices in Amman, Irbid**,** Za'atari**,** Emirati and Azraq camps. Its shelter work includes upgrading, waterproofing, tenancy information, and T-shelters. (US$ 10 million RRP). NRC is the lead actor providing shelter and non-food items (NFIs) in Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps. It distributed more than 4 million NFIs, erected more than 77,000 tents and built more than 3,500 T-shelters.[470] It also works in education (in- and out-of-school and teacher training) and protection (legal aid).

Non-camp Cash

IRC provides cash assistance to female-headed households in Jordan.[471] It is also a major SGBV and child protection partner with a RRP contribution of over US$ 9 million. Its health activities are funded through RRP with over US$ 4 million, bring its total RRP funding to US$13.2 million.[472] The cash component is directly funded by DfID and ECHO, as part of regional contracts including its work in other host countries and Syria cross border. Its strategy is to use its health programmes as an entry-point to SGBV programming and campaigning.[473]

International Catholic Migration Committee **(ICMC)** is another cash partner working in Mafraq governate. Its cash for rent programme (US$ 887,000) and NFI components (US$ 550,000) are RRP funded and its unconditional cash is funded by ECHO and BPRM. Operational in northern Jordan since 2002, ICMC has appealed for revised overall total RRP funding of over US$ 2,1 million.[474]

Medair is a Swiss NGO involved in cash for rent, transitioning to unconditional funded by OCHA (RRP) providing US$ 1.9 million of its UCAP budget.[475] Medair selects UCAP beneficiaries among the most vulnerable beneficiaries from its health, nutrition, shelter and from its WASH programmes, a total of US$ 1.7 million, all funded within the RRP framework. Medair Netherlands has a RfB fundraising certificate[476] and has Netherlands Government ANBI status. Its total budget is over US$ 31 million, about 20% of which was spent on the Syria crisis in 2013.[477] However it is a growing player in the Syria crisis as its RRP funding in 2014 was US$ 8.4 million.[478]

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[469] See Lebanon section of this report for further details.
[470] http://www.nrc.no/?aid=9147814
[471] http://www.rescue.org/where/middle_east/irc-jordan
[472] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).
[473] Interview with IRC representatives in Mafraq.
[474] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).
[475] Interview with Medair Country Representative in Irbid.
[476] http://www.stichting-rfb.nl/
[477] Medair (n.d.).
[478] UNHCR (n.d.) (b).

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies **(IFRC)** provides unconditional cash to 2200 families and will have phased this out and transferred the case load to UNHCR by the end of 2014. However, the beneficiaries will most likely end up on a waiting list as UNHCR may not have the funding to incorporate them in their programme.[479] Activities are funded through the IFRCs own appeals to which the Netherlands Red Cross have contributed some if its Netherlands Government humanitarian funding.

IRD Jordan was established in 2003, for the purpose of supporting programmatic operations in Iraq. IRD began working in Jordan in 2006 and has implemented eight programs for Iraqi Refugees with funding from BPRM and UNHCR. IRD Jordan implements a five year Community Mobilization and Education Program in public schools in Jordan with USAID funding. It has a very substantial outreach network which it mobilises to implement the 'home visit project' which serves as UNHCR's primary decision-making tool in order confirm the vulnerability profile and eligibility for cash assistance. It assessed 15 to 16,000 refugee households (81,000 people, 17% of the total registered Syrian refugee population), the data of which are entered into the RAIS database).[480] This is one of the most important information management projects funded within the RRP.

Camp Protection

IRD also implements protection activities in Za'atari. It mobilises some of its huge network of social workers and follows up on shelter needs and ensures that refugees are informed about available services and their rights in Za'atari.

International Medical Corps **(IMC)** is a camp protection partner, implementing mental health activities (psychological first aid) focussing on SGBV, early marriages and child labour. It currently manages 1200 cases in Za'atari and some in Azraq in partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children. IMC is a sector lead on mental health. Its RRP funded protection component amounts to US$ 4 million. Its health sector RRP component receives a further US$ 6 million. IMC also runs a very impressive youth centre in Mafraq town, where Syrian children of different ages have opportunities to engage in positive learning activities out of school, such as in arts and theatre.

Camp Shelter

The Ministry of Public Works and Housing (**MPWH**) is the major camp shelter partner. It develops the camp infrastructure and is finally responsible for the physical aspects of the camps with a total UNHCR fund of US$ 13.8 million. Its main functions are tendering and quality control of the implementation of this fund.

NRC is a major player in distributing (UNHCR supplied) NFIs to new comers on their first arrival in Za'atari.

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[479] Interview with IFRC representative in Amman.
[480] Interview with Head of IRD Jordan in Amman and http://www.nakhweh.org/en/organizations/163-International-Relief-and-Development-IRD-

Appendix 4: DORCAS

The recipient for the non-registered refugee component of the fund is Dorcas, a relatively small faith-based organization based in a village north of Amsterdam. It had some previous experience in working in El Meten, a relatively affluent Christian area in Mount-Lebanon. During this time it established a network of charity and social workers (community focal points), which it now uses to identify non-registered refugees. Dorcas provides food parcels (coordinated as a partner of WFP) and works with Lebanese host communities. The Netherlands government grant is used to provide non-food items to the newcomers and refers them to other agencies for other types of needs.

The project is running from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. Due to starting up delays implmentation started in 1 July 2015. The target population was initially planned at 1400 (175/month), but has been revised upwards to 1580. To date (October 2014) 700 newcomers received Dorcas assistance.

UNHCR was consulted on the selection of El Meten, and Dorcas participates in NFI and winterization coordination meetings and Dorcas is in regular contact with UNHCR in El Meten. Dorcas is also a partner of WFP food parcel distribution.

The newcomers are identified by community focal points: social workers, according to our source 70% of whom are Christian church leaders, 8 – 10% are associated with a Mosque and the remaining 20% are employed by the municipality. Dorcas does not ask beneficiaries about their religious affiliation and there is no reason to assume that the selection is not needs based. However, working in this particular area and the large number of people identified by church leaders will no doubt help church credibility among the refugees, a majority of whom is reportedly Muslim.

Dorcas has noticed that CFPs are referring less and less newcomers, another indication that the border is closing. Another factor is that municipalities are increasingly reluctant to refer to Dorcas. Dorcas has obtained permission to include Iraqi refugees in their programme which is helping them to reach their targets. They would also like to include Syrian and other refugees who have been in Lebanon for longer and have not yet been assisted by UNHCR. Dorcas estimates this to a 'significant number' of people, without (understandably) being able to give any well founded figures. It notes two reasons for this already mentioned by other UNHCR partners: fear of breach of confidentiality and retribution and that registration will not lead to assistance anyway.

Like many other partners, Dorcas has not yet begun to monitor the outcome of its project and focussed strongly on output distribution.

Dorcas complies with the tender coordination criterium in two ways:

It actively participates in the NFI and sector meetings at El Metten level, thereby avoiding duplication and assuring correct referrals.

1. It encourages the newcomers to register with UNHCR. It has knowledge of only six or seven of its Netherlands government financed project beneficiaries who have not done this and an unidentified number of which the status has not yet been verified. Further investigations revealed that many of these families have relatives in operational military units in Syria and are worried about repercussions. Based on Dorcas' information the question of added value (in terms of effectiveness) of direct financing Netherlands based NGOs remains unanswered.

2. Effectively Dorcas is a so-called 'Operating Partner', albeit a very small one. Dorcas also distributed food parcels with WFP funding and claims to be cheaper that WFP (USD 79 in stead of USD 105); even if it buys much lower quantities. However, the added value of this 30% efficiency gain is difficult to proof as there is no coordination on standards. Nevertheless it might be appropriate for DSH to investigate WFP efficiency, especially given the recent €8 million donation and the continuing shortfalls of WFP's monthly budgets.

Part of the rationale of the tender was to work with non-registered refugees, presumably assuming that these were outside the scope of UNHCR's frameworks. However, UNHCR also works with non-registered refugees. Dorcas claims it has a better understanding of context through the CFPs. However, many UNHCR partners work like this too and direct financing definitely makes UNHCR's coordination role more problematic. For instance NFI have long been replaced by UCAP within the coordinated system, but Dorcas is still distributing NFIs claiming that refugees: 'do not always buy the right things with UCAP'[481]. Dorcas liaised with the Netherlands Embassy on the visit of the parliamentarian who was the conduit for the direct NGO tender, but there is no programmatic discussion, as this is within the realm of the DSH in The Hague.

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[481] Interview with Dorcas Project Manager in Beirut