

WFP News Video

WFP Airlifts Urgently Needed Food to Syria From Iraq

WFP News Video

Shot: 4/5Feb2014

TRT: 1:49

Erbil, Iraq/Qamishli, Syria

Shotlist:

:00-:33

Erbil, Iraq

Loading Ilyushin 76 aircraft with 40 tons of food. The total operation will provide food for 300,000 people for one month.

shot: 4Feb2014

:33-:52

Erbil, Iraq

SOT: Ayad Naman, WFP Iraq

"The cargo we are sending to Qamishli comprised of 380 tons of food. Its mainly the basic items of wheat flour, rice and The parcels contains 8 items inside salt, tomatoes paste, bulgar lentils, vegetable oil and sugar"

shot: 5Feb2014

:52-01:01

Erbil, Iraq

WFP plane taking off from Erbil airport in Iraq

shot: 5Feb2014

01:01-01:42

Qamishli, Syria

WFP plane landing at Qamishli airport

shot: 5Feb2014

01:42-01:49

Qamishli, Syria

Unloading at Qamishli airport

shot: 5Feb2014

ENDS

WFP News Release

4 February 2014

WFP AIRLIFTS BRING AID TO MOST VULNERABLE IN NORTHEAST SYRIA AMID GROWING CHALLENGES

QAMISHLI, Syria –The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) started airlifting on Tuesday enough food to feed close to 30,000 displaced people for a month from Iraq to Qamishli in northeast Syria amid growing problems in reaching people, especially in conflict and besieged areas.

It is the second such WFP airlift from Erbil, Iraq, to people who would otherwise be cut off from humanitarian assistance.

The first WFP-chartered flight landed at Qamishli airport with 40 metric tons of mixed food including rice, pasta, bulgur, wheat flour, canned food, pulses, salt, vegetable oil and sugar. A total of 10 flights will deliver over 400 metric tons of WFP food and other items – mainly clothes, detergent and soap – for UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration.

Road access into northeastern Syria's Al Hassakeh Governorate remains perilous for aid agencies and no significant deliveries of relief items have reached the region overland since May. WFP airlifted food from Erbil to Qamishli in December for more than 62,000 people deprived of food assistance for over five months.

In January, WFP dispatched enough food for 3.6 million people in Syria, short of its target of 4.25 million people as the governorates of Raqqa, Deir Ezzor, Rural Aleppo and Al-Hassakeh were inaccessible. The closure of the Daraa-Damascus highway has also affected the dispatch of food to parts of Daraa, Quneitra, Damascus and Rural Damascus.

“It is tragic to see the most vulnerable Syrians going hungry and paying the heavy price for a political conflict with no end in sight,” said Ertharin Cousin, WFP’s Executive Director. “We call upon all parties to provide us with continuous and unimpeded access across the country. WFP should be able to reach all those who need food assistance all the time.”

Humanitarian agencies have not been able to reach Al Hassakeh Governorate by road consistently for over five months and security has deteriorated in the last few weeks, displacing large numbers of people. Recently, around 7,500 people fled clashes that erupted in rural parts of Al-Hassakeh to Qamishli city while others fled towards the Iraqi border.

“The road to political stability and confidence building in Syria starts with an important step: ensuring no one dies because of a lack of food or medicine or from the cold when humanitarian workers are nearby but are not allowed in” said Cousin. “Syrians must have their most basic needs met.”

Syria is WFP’s most complex emergency globally with challenges ranging from bureaucratic delays, insecurity on roads and the closure of major highways as well as sieges imposed on civilians trapped in over 40 locations across Syria as a result of the fighting.

As hunger in Syria grows, WFP is appealing for over US\$2 billion to assist more than 7 million Syrians in urgent need of food assistance in 2014. These include 4.25 million people inside Syria and over 2.9 million refugees in neighbouring countries.

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For still photos of the latest airlift, please contact: Rein.Skullerud@wfp.org

For broadcast quality video please contact: Jonathan.Dumont@wfp.org

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. On average, WFP reaches more than 90 million people with food assistance in 80 countries each year.

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