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# Meeting Minutes, 27 September 2020

Syria Operation, Damascus



*This is an unofficial UN meeting record and should not be considered as a verbatim account of the UN meeting or position.*

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<b>LOCATION</b>	Damascus, Syria
<b>DATE</b>	27 September 2020
<b>CHAIR</b>	Logistics Cluster
<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	German Red Cross, International Medical Corps (IMC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO).
<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Logistics Cluster to monitor the fuel situation in-country.</li><li>• The Logistics Cluster to call a meeting with SADCOP regarding fuel.</li><li>• Organisations to share their in-country storage needs.</li><li>• OCHA to seek clarification from MoFA on UN importation procedure.</li></ul>
<b>AGENDA</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Fuel Situation</li><li>2. Operational Updates</li><li>3. Gaps and Needs</li><li>4. AOB</li></ol>

## 1. Fuel Situation

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- Organisations reported a fuel shortage in-country to the Logistics Cluster.
- The Logistics Cluster in response conducted a rapid fuel needs assessment to gauge the impact of the fuel crisis on organisations' operations (results summary below).

### Background

- It is understood the shortage is due to major maintenance works at Baniyas refinery.
- It has been reported that the refinery is due to be up and running by the end of September.
- During the meeting, one organisation added that it may take until mid-October before the fuel refined at Baniyas is made available at fuel stations.

### Discussion

- Organisations advised during the meeting that fuel shortages are a recurring issue.
- One organisation raised that the quality of fuel available can cause mechanical problems to vehicles.

### Conclusion

- The cluster is in on-going discussions with OCHA and partners to continue monitoring the situation.
- The Logistics Cluster is also planning to call for a meeting with SADCOP (fuel provider in Syria) to gain further insights into the overall fuel situation.

### Results summary

- 36 respondents from 32 different organisations (UN and I/NGOs) took part in the survey. 86% of respondents claimed they had faced issues in sourcing fuel – especially petrol - in the past months.
- 94% of the respondents expect fuel related challenges to recur and resurface in the future.
- Reported challenges described include:
  - Delays in obtaining petrol from fuel stations, with waiting times between two and six hours.
  - A rise in operational costs.
  - Delayed, reduced and even stopping field missions completely as a result of the above, impacting effective programme monitoring and implementation.
  - Competition over scarce fuel resources as contingency fuel is stockpiled.
  - Increased use of lower quality fuel may lead to mechanical failures in the future.

## 2. Operational Updates

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### UNHAS

- UNHAS' mission to Deir-Ez-Zor is pending approval.
- UNHAS undertook an "Access Survey" with partners. Preliminary results show partner interest in flights to open for Aleppo.
- A discussion around operating flights to Aleppo will be held at the next Steering Committee meeting on 28 September.
- Organisations are encouraged to register to the UNHAS User Group and join the mailing list to ensure they are kept up to date with developments regarding UNHAS operations.
- Flights from Damascus to Qamishli continue to operate normally. The schedule can be found on the Logistics Cluster website [here](#).
- UNHAS Standard Administrative and Operating Procedures and registration and booking forms can be found on the Logistics Cluster website [here](#).
- UNHAS cargo transport capacity is limited. For organisations wishing to use an air cargo service, please see below.

### Logistics Cluster air cargo transport service to northeast Syria

- This service is a separate activity from UNHAS.
- The Logistics Cluster received USD 200,000 funding from the OCHA Syria Humanitarian Fund (SHF) COVID-19 reserve allocation for the implementation of an air cargo transport service from Damascus to Qamishli.
- The service will be free of charge to humanitarian organisations.
- Organisations are now able to submit Service Request Forms to [syria.clustercargo@wfp.org](mailto:syria.clustercargo@wfp.org). As flights are organised on an ad hoc basis, requests will be compiled ahead of organising a flight. A date for the rotation will be set in coordination with the requesting organisations.
- Organisations are required to obtain all necessary transport approvals prior to departure to ensure timely release.

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## Inter-agency crossline mission to Atareb

- High-level discussions are ongoing. OCHA advised that UN Agency focal points will be informed of details of the operation once the necessary approvals are received and a confirmed plan is in place.

## Transport

- Commercial flights are expected to resume at Damascus airport on 1 October.
- One organisation reported that they received information from several local vendors and transporters that commercial cargo transportation now requires special approvals.
- OCHA Access will follow up bilaterally for further information and provide support where needed.

## 3. Gaps and Needs

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- The Logistics Cluster will set up two Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) in Qamishli to provide an extra 640 m<sup>2</sup> of storage space for partners.
- Organisations are requested to share their in-country storage needs with the Logistics Cluster.
- Partners were reminded that if no organisations submit a request for the air cargo service to Qamishli before 25 November, the cluster will return the SHF COVID-19 grant.

## 4. AOB

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### United Nations Importation

- Following a meeting hosted by the Logistics Cluster with OCHA and other UN agencies regarding issues faced by UN agencies with importation into the country, the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) submitted a Note Verbale (NV) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) requesting clarification on the UN procedure for importation.
- As of 23 September, MoFA issued a second NV in response, outlining the procedure.
- UN agencies have sought clarification from OCHA regarding some aspects of the NV.
- OCHA informed the organisations that there will be a meeting on 28 September with MoFA and that this will be an opportunity for them to raise the issue directly.
- Partners are encouraged to raise specific topics ahead of the meeting so that the Logistics Cluster can integrate them into the meeting agenda.
- WHO provided an update on their COVID-19 responses inside Syria.

### Contacts

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