Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

UN Cross-Border Operations from Turkey to Syria

May 2018

The purpose of this document is to give an overview of the procedures to be followed by UN agencies participating in cross-border operations from Turkey to Syria through the UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 2165/2191/2258/2332/2393 approved crossings of Bab al-Hawa (BAH) - Cilvegozu and Bab al-Salam (BAS) – Oncupinar, and explains the procedures that apply before, during, and after transhipment of humanitarian supplies.

The document is divided in two main parts: Part 1 explains the process to be followed for regular transhipment via the two UNSCR-mandated hubs; Part 2 outlines the steps to be followed for ad-hoc and emergency transhipment operations which take place on short notice. The role of OCHA role in the Notification Process is explained in Annex 1 and a template of the Shipment Plan that agencies submit to the Logistics Cluster is available in Annex 2.

PART 1

SOPs for Transhipment Operations at Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa hubs

The transhipment is conducted at common logistics hubs located inside Turkey. WFP provides the hubs as well as the handling services for the transhipment of humanitarian supplies from Turkish to Syrian trucks arranged by UN agencies and/or their implementing partners. The Logistics Cluster coordinates the entire process.

The process below is subject to modifications and should be flexible to allow for new or changed circumstances that may arise during the course of the operation. Changes will be made when needed and the updated SOPs will be published and circulated accordingly.

1. UN Actors involved in cross-border operations

- **Logistics Cluster**: Coordinates access to the WFP facilities at the hubs (including guards), liaises with Turkish Customs, and ensures information sharing and coordination. Free-to-user labour, provided by WFP, is available to humanitarian organisations to tranship cargo from Turkish trucks to Syrian trucks. The Logistics Cluster is also responsible for facilitating Syrian trucks movement between the border crossing and the hub. The Logistics Cluster is also the focal point for communication for all parties including UN agencies, UN Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM) and UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) before, during and after the shipments, and for any inquiry related to shipments.

- **UNMM**: Mandated by the Security Council to control/observe the transhipment operations at the hubs. It is obligatory that at least one UN monitor is present at the opening and closing of any truck and during the loading process. They also accompany the convoy of Syrian trucks back to the border when the loading is completed.

- **OCHA**: Notifies the Syrian Government, the Turkish Government, and the relevant UN bodies regarding the planned cross-border operations. *(Please see Annex 1: Notification Process and OCHA’s role)*

- **UNDSS**: Monitors the security situation and issues travel advisories
• **UN agencies**: Submit their shipment plans to the Logistics Cluster and are responsible for arranging both Syrian and Turkish trucks, and to ensure that customs clearance is obtained for their own supplies. On the day of transhipment, representatives from each UN agency involved in the operation should be onsite to observe the transhipment of their cargo.

2. **Week before the day of the transhipment**
   - UN agencies submit their shipment plan with the below information on planned movements for the upcoming week(s) to turkey.clustercargo@wfp.org The template to submit shipment plans is in Annex 2 of this document
     - Hub to be used (BAH or BAS);
     - Approximate number of trucks expected to take part in transhipment operations at the hub (both Turkish and Syrian trucks);
     - Type of cargo;
     - Quantity (mt and m³);
     - Tentative movement date;
     - Destination (governorate, district, sub-district, community);
     - Governorate and district level information is a must to issue a notification. (Sub-district and village and community level information is not for notification but tracking purposes);
     - Number of targeted beneficiaries (information required for OCHA, the Logistics Cluster does not track this).
   - Each line in the notification should include the above information, not merged with other shipment data.

   • The final version of the notifications must be signed, stamped and submitted to Government of Syria and Government of Turkey (by OCHA) 48 hours prior to the first crossing date as indicated in the notification (these 48 hours must be working days both in Turkey and Syria).

**Weekly Notification Calendar / Timelines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latest submission of shipment plan by the Logistics Cluster to OCHA</th>
<th>Earliest possible day on which the UN cargo can be transhipped</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday by 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Monday and onwards (following week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday by 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Tuesday and onwards (following week)</td>
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</table>

N.B. the above table is the absolute latest cut-off time for submitting shipment plans each week. Agencies should aim to submit shipment plans well in advance.

• Requirements for Syrian trucks (monitored by Turkish Authorities Customs officers):
   - Should not have more than 70 litres of fuel when crossing into Turkey.
   - Should have only one person (the driver) in the vehicle, meaning no passengers.
   - Should allow for the trailer to be closed once loaded. At both UN hubs, sealing is not required for Syrian trucks unless it is an exceptional case such as special/ad hoc transhipments where special procedures may apply (See Part 2).
   - Should be properly covered, meaning that the tarpaulin should be able to securely cover all the goods.
   - Must have a Syrian plate (and not a third country plate).

• The Logistics Cluster strongly discourages the use of double-trailers (locally known as *çift romork*). In instances where this cannot be avoided, the Logistics Cluster must be notified in writing 48 hours in advance.
• Detailed information on the Syrian trucks, (plate number, truck type, brand, colour) and driver (name, ID number and phone number) need to be shared by the UN agencies at least 24 hours prior to the operation with the Logistics Cluster. The Logistics Cluster will transmit these details to the Turkish authorities and OCHA. **Once this information is shared, trucks or drivers should not be changed** (in case of changes, the Logistics Cluster should be informed immediately).

• UN agencies are responsible for the custom clearance of their shipments. The Logistics Cluster is not responsible for the custom clearance of the cargo to be transhipped.

• Custom declarations and waybills should match the notification request made by the UN agency. Issued notifications do not substitute the requirement of compliance with customs regulations. Agencies are responsible to ensure their shipment is in compliance with customs regulations and consistent with the issued notification.

### 3. One day before the transhipment

• The Logistics Cluster must be provided with details of staff and vehicles requiring access to the hub during the transhipment day for security reasons. **At least one staff member of the respective UN agency must be present at the hub on the day of movement and must bring identification.** In instances where this is not possible for security reasons, the Logistics Cluster will advise on alternative arrangements.

### 4. The day of the transhipment

• The empty Syrian trucks (arriving from Syrian side) must be ready for examination at the Syrian side of the Syria-Turkey border at 6:00 a.m.

• The custom brokers arranged by the UN agencies will gather the trucks and prioritise them to approach the Turkish gate.

• Syrian trucks should travel as a convoy/in groups when arriving from and returning to Syria. This movement is monitored by the customs officer, gendarmerie or police, UNMM, and the Logistics Cluster.

• At BAH, all empty Syrian trucks will be screened with an X-ray machine in the Turkish Custom area. This process takes between 10 minutes to 20 minutes per truck. (Maximum daily capacity of BAH for this specific operation is approximately 20 trucks).

• At BAH, all trucks must pay Weighbridge fees (whether Turkish or Syrian). Payment is made by the transporter on the day. Payment is the responsibility of the UN agencies sending the cargo across to Syria. The service provider reserves the right to refuse weighing process, which is mandatory by Turkish Customs, should the weighbridge fee not be paid.

• From the Turkish Customs area, the Syrian truck convoy will be escorted to the hub by the Turkish Gendarme and the Logistics Cluster (in BAH, they are escorted first to the weighbridge).

• Copy of cargo manifests/waybills per truck should be provided to UNMM team at the transhipment hubs.

• The transhipment operation takes place at the hubs. Free-to-user labour is provided by WFP and made available to tranship the cargo from Turkish to Syrian trucks.
• When the transhipment from Turkish to Syrian trucks is complete, the Syrian trucks must be closed. Although not a standard practice, Turkish Customs reserve the right to seal them, so trucks must be suitable for closure and equipped with adequate ropes.

• Once the process is complete, the trucks are escorted in convoy by the UNMM team, the security agencies and the Logistics Cluster to the border.

• On the way back, at the Turkish Customs, the loaded Syrian trucks go under a second screening process through the X-ray on a random basis with a ratio of average 25% of the total number of trucks.

• When Syrian trucks cross the second gate of the Turkish border prior to the zero point, transhipment is complete and UNMM will notify local officials of completion.

5. After the day of transhipment

• Each UN agency is responsible to inform the Logistics Cluster of any difference between the actual shipment and the original shipment plan (such as type of items loaded on trucks, location, completion of the shipment with less or more trucks). The Logistics Cluster communicates this information to OCHA for tracking purposes.

Procedure for requesting the Turkish Customs to work on weekends or official holidays

In situations when the UN agencies need to load or tranship outside business hours of Turkish Customs, each agency is responsible to work with its customs broker to facilitate the request of Turkish Customs to work outside of business hours. If the request is not accepted, the UN agency can submit a written request to the Logistics Cluster asking for OCHA’s support. OCHA will liaise with the Turkish Government to facilitate the request.

Procedure for Returning of Bonded Trucks

In situations when UN agencies have trucks departed from a bonded warehouse in Turkey (e.g. from Mersin to BAH) and would like the trucks to return back to the warehouse before crossing into Syria, each agency is responsible to work with its customs broker to facilitate the return of bonded trucks from the customs in compliance with the Turkish customs regulations. In case approvals are not granted by the authorities, the UN agency can submit a written request to the Logistics Cluster asking for OCHA’s support. OCHA will liaise with the Turkish Government to facilitate the request.
PART 2

Special/ad hoc transhipments

The same procedures outlined in Part 1, apply to ad hoc transhipments, with the following special requirements:

1. Procedure for Emergency Notification Submission

Applies to situations when UN Agencies plan a shipment that cannot comply with the agreed notification timelines (i.e. less than 48 hours’ notice). The procedure is as follows:

- The UN agency’s Head of Office in Gaziantep must first obtain the approval from the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) based in Damascus before a notification can be issued.
- The HC will have to sign a notification that a shipment is approved for crossing in period within less than 48 hours.
- Once the approval is received, OCHA will issue the notification as per normal procedures.
- Once the approval from Damascus is received, the UN agency informs the Logistics Cluster, and the Logistics Cluster in turn informs OCHA to process the notification.

2. Special Operational Requirements

- Syrian Trucks are sometimes required to be sealed before leaving the hub, by the UNMM team
- Trucks should be sealable
- A rope of approximately 25 m length is to be provided per truck (by the transporter) to allow proper closure of cargo and sealing.

3. Procedure for overnight stay of the Syrian trucks in Turkey

Applies to situations when the security, access or logistics parameters prevent the loaded Syrian trucks from crossing back into Syria on the same day of transhipment. The procedure is as follows:

- It is the responsibility of each UN agency to request authorisation for the trucks to stay overnight.
- The UN agency must communicate to the Logistics Cluster that an overnight stay is required for their trucks. The Logistics Cluster transmit the request to OCHA and asks for liaison support with the Turkish authorities.
- The approval and location for overnight stay of trucks will be determined by the Turkish authorities.
Annex I: Notification Process and OCHA’s Role

Notification Process

Security Council resolution 2165 requires the United Nations (UN) and its implementing partners to notify Syrian authorities of any UN cross border humanitarian assistance or personnel crossing. The following outlines the Notification process to the Syrian authorities that UN humanitarian assistance will enter Syria through Bab al-Salam and/or Bab al-Hawa from Turkey.

Notices are submitted by OCHA in English and Arabic and are shared with the Resident Coordinator of Syria (RC Syria) and the RHC/DRHC for their signature. Once the notification is signed, it is then transmitted electronically to the Syrian authorities. The Syrian authorities receive the Notification 48 hours in advance of the first truck carrying humanitarian assistance crossing the border.

UN Monitoring Mechanism has its own Notification process.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
UN SCR 2165/2191 Cross Border UN Notification and Shipment Process from Turkey

**BEFORE**

- UN organisations submit shipment request to Logistics Cluster
- Logistics Cluster compiles shipment & submits to OCHA (minimum 72 hrs in advance of shipment)
- OCHA drafts Notification for RHC / DRHC signature in English & Arabic (48 hrs in advance of submission to GoS)
- RHC / DRHC signs the Notification and sends to the HC/RC Syria for submission to GoS
- Government of Turkey (GoT)
- Government of Syria (GoS)
- HC/RC Syria sends a Note Verbale and the Notification to the GoS (48 hrs in advance of a shipment)

**DURING**

- OCHA liaises with GoT, Customs & Syrian side when requested
- Logistics Cluster liaises with UN organisation logistics officers and GoT Customs at Border Crossing
- Turkish trucks arrive at UN Transhipment Hub
- Syrian trucks arrive, are loaded with humanitarian aid and depart the UN Hub to cross to Syria (UNMM monitors are present)
- UNMM and the Logistics Cluster accompany the trucks to the Turkish border crossing
- Logistics Cluster updates OCHA daily about the agencies and # of trucks that crossed

**AFTER**

- UN Monitoring Team issues second Notification
- OCHA reviews all tracking the Logistics Cluster on a daily basis and from the UN Agencies on a monthly basis
- OCHA reports cross border shipments to NY/ERC and to the humanitarian community and donors through Fact Sheets & Bulletins
ANNEX 2: SHIPMENT TEMPLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UN Agency</th>
<th>Type of Items</th>
<th>Quantity available for Shipment</th>
<th>Tentative Movement Date</th>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Sub-District</th>
<th>Sub-District PCODE</th>
<th>Village/community</th>
<th>Approximate # of Turkish Trucks</th>
<th>Approximate # of Syrian Trucks</th>
<th>Total # of Beneficiaries (in individuals)*</th>
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*N.B. – the final column in the table, ‘Total # of Beneficiaries (in individuals)’, is for OCHA. The Logistics Cluster does not track this.*