

ECHO Factsheet - Middle East and North Africa



A refugee camp in the Middle East. © European Union/ECHO/Pekka Tiainen

Caught in-between a complex geo-political situation and rising terrorist threats, the Middle East and North Africa regions have witnessed growing instabilities over the past decade.

The long-lasting conflicts in [Iraq](#) [1] and [Syria](#) [2] have created an overwhelming and enduring humanitarian crisis, which has resulted in the displacement of millions of people within national borders or to neighbouring countries. The continuous flow of refugees escaping violence in the context of the Syria crisis is bringing the neighbouring countries close to a dangerous saturation point, with millions of people living in camps with very limited access to basic resources.

The blockade of [Gaza](#) [3] and the occupation of the West Bank have provoked an ongoing crisis with increased vulnerability and isolation of the affected populations.

[Yemen](#) [4] – one of the poorest countries in the world – is plagued with political instability, armed conflicts, and chronic under-development. It has been classified by the UN as a Level 3 emergency – the most severe, large-scale humanitarian crisis.

The frequent breaches of [International Humanitarian Law](#) [5] and Human Rights Law undermine the safety of civilians and humanitarian workers alike, and make it harder for international humanitarian organisations to reach the most vulnerable populations.

Through the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the EU and its Member States collectively are leading the international response to the crisis in Syria. More than €5 billion have been mobilised for relief and recovery assistance to Syrians in their country and to refugees and their host communities. In addition, over €3 billion were pledged at the London donors' conference in February 2016.

The bulk of funds provide medical emergency relief, [protection](#) [6], [food](#) [7] and [nutritional assistance](#) [8], [water, sanitation and hygiene](#) [9], [shelter](#) [10], [health](#) [11], and [logistics](#) [12] services. The Commission also allocates aid

to Iraqi displaced people and refugees in Jordan and Lebanon to cover emergency support to the most vulnerable. The EU is supporting a [principled](#) [13] and impartial humanitarian response, on the basis of needs only, without taking sides in the conflicts.

In Yemen, EU humanitarian aid is assisting populations across the country affected by conflict and [forced displacement](#) [14], food insecurity and malnutrition.

The EU has provided humanitarian aid to help meet the basic needs of Palestinians since 2000. The Commission's assistance currently targets 1.2 million Palestinians in Gaza and 300 000 in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

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