



# MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL REPORT 2019











# CONTENTS

KEY STATISTICS

MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL OFFICE

EGYPT

IRAQ

JORDAN

LEBANON

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

SYRIA

TURKEY

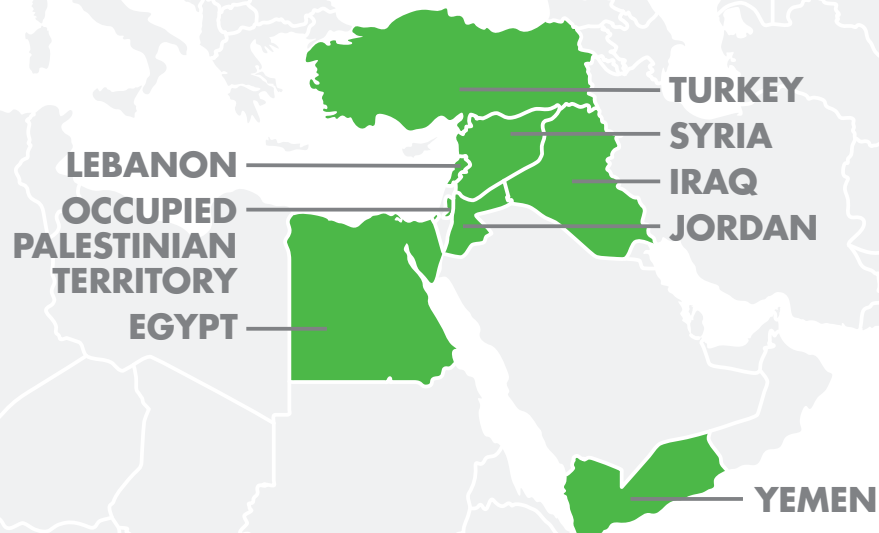
YEMEN

CONTACTS

1  
3  
5  
12  
15  
18  
29  
38  
41  
44  
47



# IN 2019, ACTION AGAINST HUNGER...



REACHED  
**2.4 MILLION**  
PEOPLE



EMPLOYED  
**896**  
PEOPLE



CONDUCTED  
**12**  
RESEARCH  
PROJECTS

# ...IN THE MIDDLE EAST



## WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE



**49,162**  
hygiene kits  
distributed



**10,123**  
water points  
improved



**670,411**  
cubic meters of  
water delivered

## MENTAL HEALTH & CARE PRACTICES



**26**  
mental health and  
care practices  
projects



**429**  
people received  
MHCP kits



**70%**  
of people benefitting  
from IYCF received  
preventative support

## FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS



**188,724**  
people  
reached



**38**  
food security  
and livelihoods  
projects



**69,475**  
people received  
unrestricted  
cash

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



**613** people reached



**2** disaster risk reduction  
projects



**613** people received DRR  
and DRM training

## NUTRITION & HEALTH



**243,132**  
people  
reached



**18**  
health and  
nutrition  
projects



**3**  
health  
centres

## OTHER SECTORS



ADVOCACY



PROTECTION



SHELTER



RAPID RESPONSE  
MECHANISM







# MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL OFFICE



**ADVOCACY**



**FOOD SECURITY  
AND LIVELIHOODS**



**MENTAL HEALTH  
AND CARE PRACTICES**



**NUTRITION  
AND HEALTH**



**PROTECTION**



**SHELTER**



**WATER, SANITATION  
AND HYGIENE**

**Chiara Saccardi**  
Head of operations  
for Middle East  
Madrid, Spain

**Jonathan Cunliffe**  
Regional  
Operations  
Director for Middle  
East  
Paris, France

It is our pleasure to share with you the work completed by Action Against Hunger in the Middle East region during the last year. The region has once again seen more than its fair share of basic humanitarian needs that Action Against Hunger had continued to help to address; especially related to the crises in Yemen and in Syria (and the Syrian refugee hosting countries around Syria), as well in long-standing complex emergencies, such as Palestine and Iraq. Equally, Action Against Hunger has worked on sustainable developmental activities for refugees, refugee hosting communities and other vulnerable communities across the region.

2019 has been characterised by turbulent times as protests erupted in many countries; ongoing conflicts in Syria, Libya and Yemen took new turns with increasing negative impact on populations and further hampering projections for sustainable solutions

and peace engagements; tensions between Saudi Arabia, Iran and the USA reached new high peaks; the American administration engaged with important political shifts in the region. All these quite unfavourable developments led to sustained and higher humanitarian needs, which sum up to as much as 42 million people in need across the region by beginning of 2020. Half of them live in situation of continued displacement, with lack of access to basic services and scarce livelihood opportunities, coupled with widespread protection concerns and life and health threatening conditions.

This report will help to explain the range and innovation of Action Against Hunger programmes to address the extent of activities required to meet the different needs of the communities we work with. All these activities are focused on one common goal: that of ensuring the permanent ending of hunger across

the region. We take this opportunity to thank all our partners who have worked with us – governments, local authorities, communities, inter-governmental organisations, partner NGOs, institutional and private donors – in helping us to move towards reaching that common goal. We also highlight and praise the continuous engagement of our colleagues and teams who are able to engage daily and commit to our principles and values with delivering quality and timely interventions in the field. Finally, we would like to thank the people we serve and communities with whom we have worked; it is you who continue to shape and change the nature of our support and ensure that is more relevant to your needs and of those people around you. Your participation in our programmes and feedback on those programmes helps to ensure that we are every year a better organisation that is able to serve you better.



الجمعية  
مكافحة الجوع  
ACTION  
AGAINST  
HUNGER



# EGYPT



During the past 10 years, Egypt has gone through periods of political volatility, which also affected the country's economy that is largely dependent on tourism and agriculture.

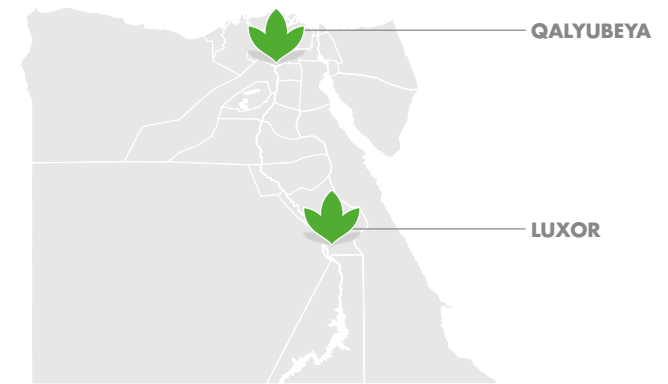
With millions of Syrians taking refuge and saturating the capacity in the region, roughly 130,000 people were forced to flee to Egypt. The country hosts thousands of refugees and asylum seekers arriving not only from Syria, but also from Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia as well as Iraq, Yemen and Somalia. The inflow Syrian refugees prompted Action Against Hunger to open a mission in Egypt to cover the needs of those most vulnerable: Syrian refugees and the impacted Egyptian host communities.

Access to food and water are challenged by numerous factors: population growth, urbanisation, poverty, desertification, climate change, and poor infrastructures. Access to decent income generation sources in both rural and rural areas confront both farmers, women

and youth with multiple dimension inequalities on access to resources, basic services, training, employment opportunities, markets, thus increasing the profile of vulnerability to hunger.

2019 has been marked by widespread demonstrations, linked to some constitutional amendments and to a quite restrictive law that disciplines the work of NGOs. Situation in North Sinai keeps characterised by high level of tensions and open conflict.

Action Against Hunger began working in Egypt in June 2015 by providing emergency relief to people in need. An integrated needs assessment on nutrition, water and food security focusing on Upper Egypt governorates showed prevalence of food insecurity, undernutrition pockets and lack of income opportunities, mainly affecting the Egyptian population and impacting their socioeconomic development. All projects in Egypt cover a range of sectors in a cohesive and matching way, including nutrition with water, livelihoods with strengthening of



the civil society. All are shared and implemented with local partners and supported by Action Against Hunger staff who have experience and technical expertise in several sectors.

Action Against Hunger Egypt was able to help more than 150,000 people in underserved areas. We increased the capacity of 61 grassroots organisations, which are now more capable and accountable towards their communities and the Egyptian regional and local governments.

Despite significant humanitarian and development added value brought by cooperation organizations in Egypt, funding availability and mechanisms for sustained engagement and long-term allocation of resources has proved challenging. Therefore, Action Against Hunger has decided to downscale its activities in 2019, and closing the mission in Egypt at the end of August 2019.

# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

## REVOLUTIONISING CATTLE FEEDING WHILE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

In a small village outside of Armant in Upper Egypt, the organisation “Islamic Charity Association in Armant El Heet” has revolutionised cattle feeding, while protecting environment at the same time. The fertile soil of Armant has always been particularly good for growing sugar cane, while the mild climate gives additional benefits. However, the large production of different outputs also renders for significant waste that remains. Before, the practice among farmers was to burn all cane leftovers once all sugar could be processed out of the plant. This made for heavy air pollution during the high season of the sugar cane harvest. In addition to putting a heavy environmental strain on the population in the area, the burning of sugar cane leftovers has also scared off tourists who had complained about occasional heavy smoke in the area.

In response to the complaints from inhabitants about the impact of the smoke on people’s health, the association began thinking about more environmentally sustainable solutions. They saw an opportunity in an idea that came from a large association that applied methods used for recycling of rice and wheat by-products on sugar cane. The recycled rice and wheat by-products have been used for a long time to feed cattle, especially in times when fresh grass and other fodder are not available. Fathi Mohammad, who has been working with the organisation since the inception of the project, explained how it all came to being:

“The association began shredding the sugar cane leftovers. They took the shredded sugar cane to a lab to analyse, and discovered that sugar cane had higher protein value than rice and wheat – which is extremely beneficial for cattle feeding. So they started developing the idea and applying it on a small scale, and discovered that they can expand and scale up. However, they faced the challenge to convince other farmers to apply this method, as they are not easily convinced to test new practices.”

The “Islamic Charity Association in Armant El Heet” saw the opportunity not only to improve environment, but especially to change to cost-friendlier cattlefeeding practices while employing youth who were struggling to find income opportunities in the region. The organisation immediately got the support from the Head of the District of Armant, who was receiving more frequent complaints about the pollution, but was also worried about finding a good way to engage the youth in contributing to the society and find employment. The association then secured financial support from the GRASP project to buy the necessary equipment to start the shredding of sugar cane and feed the fodder to the cattle on their farm. Once the shredding took off on a small scale, the organisation struggled to persuade small farms to take part. Fathi says that this was when the association started approaching bigger farms with a lot of livestock and cattle because they

required high-value inputs, and a lot of financial resources to feed all their animals:

“When we approached the big farms, we presented the idea, they started implementing it, and it helped them reduce those feeding costs. They then reached out to smaller farms. In this case we followed a top-to-bottom approach, and now the farmers collect sugar cane leftovers by themselves, and hand over everything to us for processing. It also provides profit for the farmers, which is an added encouragement to collect the crops and bring them to the association; we then sell the fodder and return the profit to the farmers.” Fathi explains that the farmers’ initial hesitations to feed their animals with sugar cane fodder have now been changed into the complete opposite. The farmers began by giving the recycled sugar cane fodder as a replacement during the off-season for wheat, and ever since authorities reduced production of rice as it requires high water consumption. This has now also changed to the wheat season as well, simply because the fodder is cheaper and the crop widely available all over Egypt. Furthermore, Fathi says that since the association introduced adding urea and molasses that remain after sugar production to the mix, and nutritional value of the fodder had increased significantly: “The way we use urea is to dissolve it in water and then spray it over the produced fodder.



This has helped increase the protein value of the fodder by 20 per cent!” says Fathi.

The project has really changed the villages surrounding Armant: not only has the air improved, but new techniques were particularly valuable to open minds about the vast benefits of innovation in everyday farming, and youth got opportunity to earn money for their work. Fathi concludes by giving details about how GRASP helped contribute to make all these changes happen: “GRASP supported our idea and efforts to collect sugar cane from more farmers, which we would not have been able to afford on our own. Through GRASP we were also able to pay salaries of our workers. About 100 people directly got the benefit from this project, either through working in the association or directly through the project. Indirectly, about 200 households benefitted from this project. I would also like to stress the level of cooperation. In the beginning, as per request from GRASP, I went to the city council and got the data about the number of people living in the area who would be positively affected if we worked to improve the environment, as well as how it would affect the labour force in the area, as all parts of the process require extensive labour input. We had the idea and the technical expertise, but the project helped us finance the implementation,” says Fathi Mohammed.









# IRAQ

  
38,800

  
26,539

  
12,876

  
**162**  
STAFF

  
**OPERATING**  
**SINCE**  
**2013**

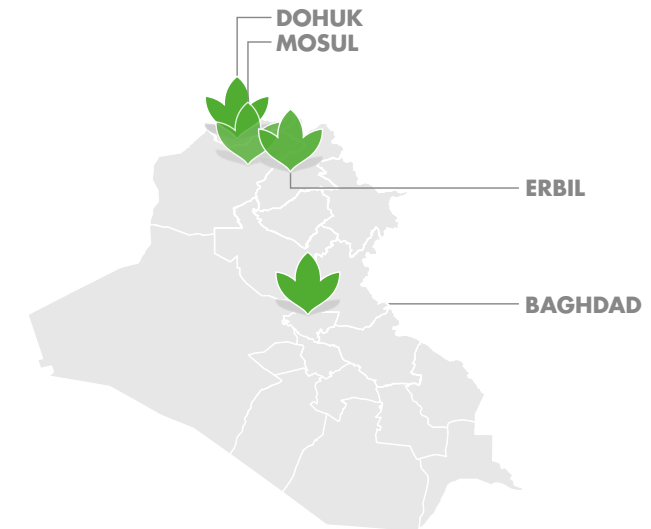
  
**REACHED**  
**78,215**  
**IN 2019**

In Iraq, an estimated 4.1 million people remain in need of some type of humanitarian assistance, with over 1.4 million based in Ninewa governorate and nearly 300,000 in Dohuk governorate (Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2020), where Action Against Hunger is operational.

Iraq's 2014-2017 conflict with Islamic State (IS), with multiple military campaigns to regain control of Iraqi territory, resulted in several waves of displacements. The time spent under IS rule and the military campaigns has exacerbated many problems experienced by the population, such as limited livelihood opportunities, damaged or destroyed housing and water supplies, and a breakdown of social cohesion due to past hostilities between different groups. In October 2019 and beyond, major protests and demonstrations across the country occurred. Although the conflict with IS has since ended, the consequences of

this instability and volatility continue to affect the most vulnerable groups in Iraqi society.

Our key sectors in Iraq are Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Mental Health and Care Practices (MHCP) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH). We recognise the importance of the integration between the sectors. Therefore, many of our projects are integrated in order to meet the holistic needs of the Iraqi people. An example of this would be that when the MHCP needs are not adequately addressed, the potential impact of other projects are undermined.- An example of this is linked to the fact that one of the main issues in Iraq at present is limited access to employment opportunities. If the MHCP needs are left untreated, the impact would negatively affect people's ability to function and thrive in the workplace. The WaSH team continue to work on innovative responses with partners in country in



order to improve people's access to basic WaSH services and provisions at both the household and community level.

In 2019, Action Against Hunger in Iraq reached 78,215 individuals: 26,539 individuals for FSL, 12,876 individuals for MHCP, and 38,800 individuals for WaSH.

The Iraq mission has an established presence in Mosul, Dohuk, Sinjar, Sinune, Erbil and Baghdad. In addition, Action Against Hunger are currently opening a new field-base in Basra in southern Iraq to expand our geographic coverage and extend our support to the Iraqi people.



# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

## OVERCOMING HARDSHIP THROUGH PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

50-year old Hala from Mosul lives at the Hammam Al-Ali camp. Like many other people displaced from Mosul since 2017, she has gone through many traumatic experiences. Hala has been in therapy with an Action Against psychologist for a few months, and as she herself says, the difference is enormous: once a depressed and withdrawn person who was contemplating suicide had now become a focal point for many in the camp, with many calling her “Mukhtara” (a prominent person making important decisions in the community), a role usually reserved for elderly men. Most importantly, she says, she had gone back to her once favourite leisure pastime: writing.

Hala was 16 years old when she married her 20-year-old neighbour. Her husband went to serve in the military, spending most of the time away from home. But when the Iraqi army got disbanded in 2003, after many years of his service, her husband opened a private pharmacy. The business grew steadily and made them one of the richest families in the neighbourhood. They had eight children, five boys and three girls. With time, the majority of her children married too, and Hala became a grandmother to 12 grandchildren.

At the time when ISIL came to Mosul, Hala's firstborn son had just become a first-year medical student. He always had conservative views about religion, and he started dressing differently, speaking differently and went out with people much older than him. It was therefore not surprising to her when her son later joined the ranks of ISIL; he was one of many in his neighbourhood.

As time went on, less food and other items were available in the market. The city was under siege, and Hala's family had no source of income and there was a shortage in everything: food, clothes, medical supplies, and even baby diapers. With the destruction of three of their own houses, the family moved together into one remaining family house where neither electricity nor water were available. Finding the situation unbearable, Hala thought that it would be best if she and her husband left, taking their grandchildren.

It was around that time that the biggest tragedy in the family happened: “Heavy battles were fought outside, no one dared to leave the house. Nonetheless, I decided to go out and at least get water for the children. I remember the grandchildren begging to come along, they

hadn't left the house for so long. My stubborn youngest son came along despite my attempts to send him back inside but he wouldn't listen. We walked about 300 meters when we heard a huge explosion. I turned around and saw white smoke rising from our house. I ran back to find that our house was destroyed with entire family inside,” said Hala, pausing between sentences, with pain in her face, and tears in her eyes. “Had I taken the children with me, we would not have had to go through this madness.”

Hala stayed with one of her neighbours for a short while until she left Mosul in August 2017, and settled in the Hammam Al-Ali camp for internally displaced persons. She lives with two of her three remaining daughters and her youngest son. Her second daughter has been living with her in-laws since her husband's death.

She remembers that when she first came to the camp, she was really struggling, even refusing to leave the tent because of fear. “Neighbours in the tent next to mine didn't even know I existed,” said Hala. Her lowest point came when she started wishing that her life would end. This is when she took the opportunity to take therapy sessions, which helped her going back to her



normal self, one day at a time: “I would not have been able to do it without the help from Action Against Hunger and their counsellors,” she says. After a few sessions, Hala took up writing again. She is proud that she went from being someone who was shutting everyone out and being suicidal, to someone who became the focal point between the camp management and the camp residents, in charge of mediating in disputes, and counselling individuals and families during hardship.

Hala now believes that things will get better, especially for her son, who only recently finished sixth grade: “We lost all men in the family: brothers, fathers, and husbands, so now I want to give my son the best education I can and be there for him so that he can grow up to become a great man, hopefully, a doctor or a pharmacist, like his father.”

Hala says that Action Against Hunger’s mental health programme helped her get out of the darkness she was living in. At times when doesn’t feel the best, Action Against Hunger’s team would send someone to her tent to talk and listen to her: “I am very lucky to have access to, therapy; it has made all the difference in my life and I can now better care for myself, my family and my community,” says Hala.









# JORDAN



86,522



2,709



37

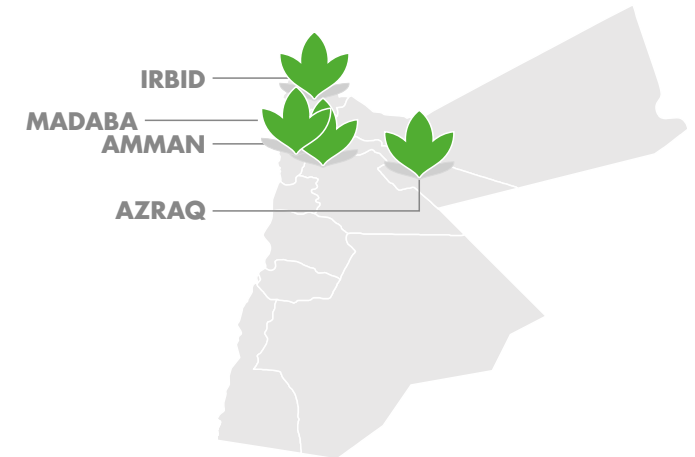
113  
STAFFOPERATING  
SINCE  
2013REACHED  
89,268  
IN 2019

By the end of 2019, more than 600,000 Syrian refugees were recorded in Jordan. This number does not take into account almost as many refugees who are unregistered by UN authorities. This long-term impact of the crisis continued to strain the Jordanian economy and infrastructure, with unemployment, water availability, increased protection risks, and high use of negative coping mechanisms remaining prevalent. The government is under increasing pressure to meet multiple social, economic, and institutional needs, while also considering decreasing natural resources and increased demands for access to public utilities, schooling, health services, and employment opportunities.

The humanitarian-development nexus therefore remained relevant in 2019 with donors and agencies alike beginning to transition to longer-

term and development-oriented approaches, though notable donor fatigue and gaps in funding to Jordan remain.

The Jordan mission maintained its presence in its three main sectors, WaSH, FSL, and MHPSS in 2019 across three bases for both host communities and refugee populations. Most key activities continued from 2018, including household-level water connections and WaSH facility rehabilitation, and public institution level, cash-for-work, mental health system strengthening, and community awareness raising for water conservation, waste-sorting and recycling, and mental health stigma and referral pathways. The mission also began implementing its first agriculture-centric project through a WaSH and FSL integrated project to improve the resilience and water optimisation in communities



hosting Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians.

Action Against Hunger continued working closely with local partners and community-based organisations to implement activities in all sectors while aiming to build the capacity of local actors. Notably, the mission began to draft a new country strategy towards the end of 2019 to align with the transitioning humanitarian-development landscape within Jordan and promote sustainability and accountability of future interventions.



# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

## HUNGER FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AT AZRAQ CAMP

For the past nine years, Syrian refugees have been living in Jordan after fleeing the Syrian civil war. Some of these refugees settled in Azraq Camp, which is now home to 35,752 Syrian refugees.

One of these refugees, Fareejah, works as a plumber in the camp through Action Against Hunger's Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH) programme, which is completed in partnership with UNICEF. She settled in the camp in Jordan with her husband and children in 2015.

"I say thank you to God for helping us find safety here in Jordan," says Fareejah. She is one of the 24 refugees (12 men and 12 women) who were chosen to take part in a plumbing workshop, which later led to working opportunities in villages around the camp. The plumbing training was offered by Action Against Hunger as part of the "Increasing community and ownership and sustainability of WaSH services in Azraq Camp, Zarqa Governorate".

Fareejah struggled to cope during her first days in the camp, as she could not find any means of supporting her family. However, after four years of living in the camp, she finally received an opportunity to volunteer, supported by Action

Against Hunger and community to complete this essential work.

Action Against Hunger has dedicated its work at the camp to helping nearly 40,000 refugees since 2015 through the camp-wide WaSH projects. In 2019, activities focused on operation and maintenance of WaSH facilities, hygiene promotion and community mobilisation, and hygiene item distributions. This project trains female and male plumbers to conduct minor maintenance on the communal WaSH blocks (latrines) installed, and maintained throughout the camp.

When Fareejah lived in Syria, she often completed household plumbing and maintenance tasks herself while her husband was working abroad. This experience made her an excellent candidate for the plumbing training. The society in the camp is a society of its own that follows the views and cultural norms in the Middle East. As plumbing is known as a stereotypically male field, Fareejah felt the impact of these gender division right away. "Anywhere we go people would be surprised, or they would laugh and ask 'oh, you are a woman and you are a plumber?'" she said. This only fueled her motivation to challenge these stereotypical views.





Cultural and social gender norms play a role in preventing women from gaining the same skills as men. Fareejah believes that all women living in the camp should not hesitate to go out into the world and find jobs, if they want to. She hopes that more women would become brave enough to break such cultural boundaries, and show that they are as strong as the men living in Azraq Camp. “Every woman should prove to herself and to her society her worth and that a woman can do anything.”

Through her experience working with Action Against Hunger’s WaSH team, she obtained many important skills, such as how to maintain the WaSH blocks and install a French toilet. She feels that all skills she learned will benefit her, not only now, but in the future as well, wherever life takes her. “We will have gained knowledge and experience and when we return we can create new lived for ourselves,” she says.







# LEBANON



163,168



3,305



1,953



1,720



148  
STAFF



OPERATING  
SINCE  
2006



REACHED  
170,146  
IN 2019

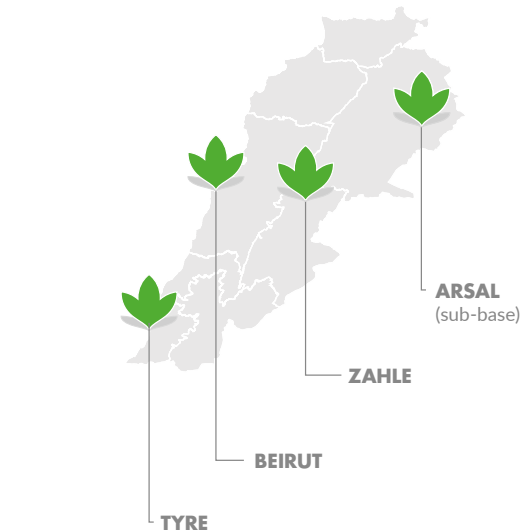
After growing social unrest, 2019 saw the onset of a significant social movement and political crisis in Lebanon, the Thwara (Revolution). Protesters lambasted the political elite, and blamed it for decades of mismanagement, corruption and sectarianism. The situation reached a boiling point on 17 October, with unprecedented nationwide protests which led to the resignation of the government and a significant economic, financial and banking crisis.

Nearly a decade after the onset of the Syria crisis, Lebanon continues to be the host of an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees with growing needs. Refugees face massive socioeconomic difficulties; their vulnerabilities have been further worsened by the economic crisis. For many refugees, meeting basic needs like food, water, shelter is more difficult than ever despite unprecedented levels of

humanitarian funding for the Syria crisis. 73 per cent of the Syrian refugee households live below the poverty line and 88 per cent continue to use negative food-related coping strategies, including meal skipping.

In parallel, vulnerabilities have risen in Lebanon, particularly among the Lebanese who are increasingly concerned about their income and their access to food.

Action Against Hunger established its presence in Lebanon in 2006, initially supporting the internally displaced population following the armed conflict of July 2006. In 2011, we expanded our operations to provide humanitarian assistance through food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, protection, food-security, livelihoods and nutrition. Our interventions use a comprehensive approach encompassing humanitarian, stabilisation and resilience



components, covering the South, Nabatieh, Bekaa, and includes hard-to-reach areas like Aarsal, Baalbek El-Hermel, and Chebaa.

In 2019, our nutrition programme expanded to include interventions aimed at improving infant and young child feeding (IYCF) at community level as a key priority in the effort to improve survival, growth, and development of children.



# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

## ALONE IN THE CRISIS

Amina from Al-Qusair in Syria opens the door to her tent and slowly guides Action Against Hunger's staff around. The 7-year old woman is almost blind, has a string of health issues and her movement around the tent is with great difficulty. No light goes through her tent. Contours of pots and dishes sprayed across the floor in Amina's makeshift kitchen. In the middle of it there is a bowl of unfinished meal, a simple dish of bulgur and rice. She has no way to refrigerate food, and whatever little food she has is cooled by the freezing weather outside. Her main room is equally modest: two thin mattresses, a pillow and a blanket neatly curled around a small stove that's emitting feeble heat: "I hardly have any fuel to run the heater, and what I manage to scrap up leaks out; it's broken", she says. With walls built of thin wooden panels constructed on low layers of concrete bricks, and loosely covered with thin plastic sheets, it is impossible not to feel the light breeze of cold air coming from outside.

Amina came to Lebanon in 2011, shortly after the war started in Syria, and settled in Aarsal. She has one daughter who is married and has her own family but she has no income and very little to survive on. Her daughter rarely comes

to visit and even rarer has the means to bring her mother over. Apart from sporadic visits of neighbours, Amina is all alone, with only a small television to keep her company. Her life was difficult even before the war; her husband passed away 30 years ago, and she raised her daughter alone. Now, without an income of her own, the little she has is thanks to the generosity of her neighbours: "I don't have my UNHCR aid card anymore, and I can't buy food from the minimarket on credit because they know I have no way of paying them back. I only have god to turn to, he is my only saviour. I only go out to visit my neighbour in the tent next door to get some warmth."

Through the years of displacement and living in poor conditions, Amina's overall health deteriorated, and now she suffers from many illnesses, such as high blood pressure and heart disease. Her vision has been limited to only one eye, and when she last had the opportunity to visit a doctor, she was told that only surgery would save her vision. She needs medication to sustain the minimum of her health and to remain pain-free; however, medicine is expensive and visiting a doctor for check-ups even more so: "I can only go to the hospital if

I can borrow the money. I ask my neighbours to lend me the money, I need a minimum of 6,000LBP (US\$3.99), but they don't have that kind of money either. When I need medication, I go to the pharmacy and ask to get medicines for free. They sometimes give them to me on credit. I already owe them a lot of money", Amina says.

Earlier in 2019 she was forced to demolish a part of her tent. It was particularly hard on her, because she had relocated to where she currently lives in order to be closer to her daughter's family, and it took a lot of time for her to settle in the already poorly constructed structure. A young man from the camp came and helped me, god bless him. He brought down the wall and rebuilt it the way they asked".

When asked about what is most difficult for her, Amina says it is being unable to afford basic food and medicine: "I have to pay for rent of the tent, and pay for electricity, where would I get that money from? The doctor told me that I will become blind. I don't care about my sight, I don't have the money for it, and if I did, I would rather use it for food", Amina says.





© Alisa Caplan Burnett / Alisa Burnett Photography








# OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES



135,050



9,215



613



67  
STAFF



OPERATING  
SINCE  
2002



REACHED  
144,878  
IN 2019

2019 marks 52 years of the Israeli military occupation and the 12 years of the imposed land, air and sea blockade on the Gaza Strip. With the lack of peace or reconciliation on the political horizon and shrinking humanitarian space, the situation remains highly volatile across the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).

Clashes between the Israeli Security Forces (ISF) and Palestinians continued in the West Bank. In 2019 the Israeli government approved the construction plans for 5,995 new housing units in the West Bank settlements, and continued to provide security, infrastructure and administrative services as well as housing, education, and medical care to more than 642,867 settlers residing in unlawful settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. During the same period of time, 504 Palestinian homes and other structures were destroyed due to the lack of permits.

In the Gaza Strip, 2019 marked the

first anniversary of the Great March of Return. Since March 30 2018, Gazans have been holding weekly protests along the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel to request the end of the blockade and their right to return to their original lands following their forced displacement since 1948. These weekly peaceful protests have been met with excessive use of force causing thousands of injuries. Such dramatic events added more burden on the overstretched health system. The still unresolved intra-Palestinian political divide is having negative repercussions on the delivery of public services in the Gaza Strip. On top of which, the individuals injured during the protests (mostly young, working-age men but also children) are forming a new vulnerable group with specific and long lasting physical and mental injuries leaving some of them unable to earn a living, putting additional stress in the families and risking exacerbating gender-based violence. Electricity provision slightly improved to an average of 12 hours per day but

remains insufficient to meet the needs of the two million inhabitants of the Gaza Strip.

Despite such a complex environment, the mission has been able to demonstrate the very positive impact of its programmes, achieving a significant position as a humanitarian organisation of reference.

Our projects evolve around the following key aims: protecting communities from forcible transfer, protecting and restoring livelihoods, providing highly vulnerable communities with immediate access to water, providing immediate cash assistance, avoiding the loss of livelihoods and falling into the lowest levels of vulnerability when suffering a shock, and covering the most basic needs to populations suffering shocks.





# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

## GOOD SANITATION FOR HEALTHIER MIND AND BODY

Amal, a 37-year-old woman living in Al Buraij refugee camp, knows nothing but hardship. After her husband left her a few years ago, she has been raising her five children on her own, now without her husband's retirement salary, and in a house lacking most basic needs. She has been baking bread on fire, and selling it to her daughters' teachers, but the little income that she makes out of it makes it very difficult for the family to survive. The house she lives in has no proper access to water and sanitation. Amal has no water tanks, no toilet, and not even a kitchen. Without the running water in the house, Amal had to collect 30 jerry cans of water per day to meet her household water needs.

The family's existing toilet lacked basic components such as a toilet seat, tiling and a sink: "We were relying on an old chair without pipes and needed basic equipment. We only use water to clean it, as we don't have money

to buy hygiene products. Sometimes I manage to buy soap, but most of the time we don't even have the means for that. What's even worse, our toilet didn't have a window or a door to close, we were using curtains to get privacy, covered the window with a plastic sheet. Sometimes my daughters had to go to their grandfather's to take a bath," says Amal.

"It's very embarrassing just to feel that you need to use other people's toilets, let alone to use them. They can do us this favour once in a while and bear with us, but not every time," continues Amal.

The children were suffering from intestinal worms, and Amal frequently spotted insects and rats inside of the house. In addition, her 13-year-old daughter suffers from involuntary urination for psychological reasons, and needs to take a bath on a daily basis. In order for her to be able to do that, she had to rely on her

grandfather's facilities and, as a result, her psychological problems, especially during her menstrual days, worsened.

Action Against Hunger heard of the family's burden and installed a toilet and a kitchen. Amal is now more at ease, as she now has a water tank and sinks installed and doesn't have to carry 30 jerry cans a day to her home: "I can now also invite my brothers to visit me, because I was shy and ashamed before. My children were so proud that they told the entire neighbourhood that we now have a toilet and a kitchen!"

Despite the fact that Amal's living conditions remain difficult, installation of a toilet and a kitchen has given a boost to her psychosocial wellbeing. She laughs more now, and feels more confident about her way of living. She is determined and willing to do whatever it takes to guarantee good living conditions for her children.











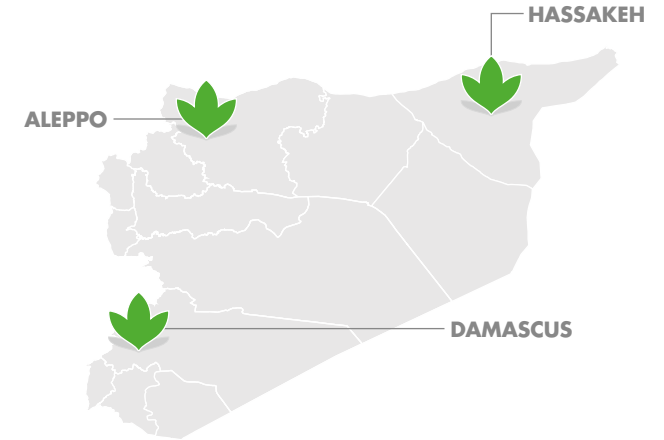
# SYRIA

  
1,276,610

  
73,441

  
538

  
105



  
**114**  
STAFF

  
**OPERATING**  
**SINCE**  
**2008**

  
**REACHED**  
**1.3M**  
**IN 2019**

In the ninth year of the crisis, humanitarian needs in Syria remained staggering in terms of scale, severity and complexity. According to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 11.7 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 6.2 million internally displaced (IDPs). Some 5 million people are in acute need due to a convergence of vulnerabilities resulting from displacement, exposure to hostilities and limited access to basic goods and services.

Action Against Hunger's strategy is articulated around two complementary approaches: emergency response programming and building the resilience capacity of vulnerable individuals, households, and communities across Syria.

The country programme carries out activities in eight governorates: Dar'a, Hassakeh, Homs, Rural Damascus, Lattakia, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor. We are the only Damascus-based agency with significant operational presence

in North East Syria (NES). In 2019, 74% of our beneficiaries were in government-controlled areas, 20% beneficiaries were in hard-to-reach areas and 6% of beneficiaries were reached via cross-line access. Our humanitarian response covers a wide range of sectors, of which 52% are WaSH activities. These include water trucking, maintenance/rehabilitation of water and sanitation infrastructure, and distribution of hygiene kits.

44% of interventions are Health activities. These include provision of medical equipment for local health centres, capacity building, and mental health and psychosocial support. 2% of interventions are FSL activities, including seed distribution, and workshops for home gardening, vegetable processing and conservation. Another 2% of interventions are NFI and education activities.

In 2019, the Syria mission continued to consolidate and expand its operational reach across Syria and its partnerships with other humanitarian actors. In line with increasing the

range of implementation modalities to reach those most in need, and securing funds, Action Against Hunger signed a new MoU with the Ministry of Health and renewed existing MoUs with other ministries. We consolidated our presence and response in new areas of interventions, and added new sectors of intervention to its strategy (mainly Shelter and Nutrition & Health).

Another key pillar was strengthening an integrated approach between the technical departments to ensure that programming, analysis and advocacy are grounded in evidence-based examples. Building on this, engagement with donors and other key stakeholders at national and international level was done bilaterally and in coordination with other humanitarian response actors to advocate for a needs-based, principled and sustainable humanitarian response across Syria.



# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

## WATER TRUCKING IN AR-RAQQA

Um Jaber, 52 years old, is heading a family of eight. She shares the only habitable room in her house with her sick husband and their four daughters. Her two sons are away, serving in the military.

In 2017, her family left their village for a couple of months due to the intensity of the clashes. They returned when the battles ended.

"I escaped with my family under the heavy shelling. We paid a smuggler 100,000 SYP to help us cross the river and reach the Kurdish control area. My children's bags of clothes fell into the water, and we couldn't retrieve them. We were among around 15 persons sitting on the small wooden boat of the smuggler. We stayed in a tent, and we could hear bombing and shelling on the other side of the Euphrates, not knowing what was happening to our homes and lands. When we returned, parts of our house were destroyed by the shelling, and all our things were stolen; the things which we spent our entire life to collect, we lost them in two months." Now, the family is living in one room with their sick 70-year-old father who needs help for each movement.

They managed to pitch a tent and put a fire wood heater in it. "We don't have heating oil, it is not available all the time and it is expensive for us, so we depend on firewood. However, we put the heater in a tent outside as the smoke is very dangerous, we can't sleep in the same room after turning it off. We just spend the day in it. After we returned, my two sons volunteered in a militia for several months. Now they are in the military service, for which they got paid for the first time this month."

Um Jaber's daughters stopped going to school when the village was taken by ISIS. Now, they are 15 and 20 years old, and can't resume their studies.

"Our area is rich of truffles. This mushroom grows by itself in all the fields, so I go with my daughter early morning to pick truffles. We keep some to eat at home, and I sell the rest. It is a seasonal plant so I am trying to benefit from this period as much as possible."

Um Jaber is now depending on Action Against Hunger water tanks to fetch water. She doesn't receive the water from any other source, as the network near her home has been damaged.





“Before the installation of the tanks, I needed around 10,000 SYP monthly to buy water from private water trucks. Sometimes we were forced to stay two weeks without taking a shower because we didn’t have the money to pay for water. Now, the tanks are near my home and I collect water every day. This helps me save some money, which is already very little.”

The 60-year-old Um Ahmad has experienced a similar fate. She lives with her husband and her big family of 14 people. Her two sons are working in Lebanon, and her daughters-in-law and grandchildren are living with her in the same house.

“We used to live from our livestock. Our income was very good before we had to flee, and our home was one of the biggest houses in the village. When we came back after three months, our cattle had been taken away, and a part of our home was destroyed. All our home

things were looted, even the tiles. Now, I do the laundry using my hands, and I sit on the ground to wash the dishes. It is very difficult for me, with my age, to do this type of work, but there is no another choice.

We haven’t received water from the network for a long time. My daughters-in-law are managing to fetch some drinking water from the Action Against Hunger tanks in the street. They are far from our home. We also depend on private water trucks to get the water for domestic tasks. We need two cubic metres each week, which costs 2,000 SYP. Unfortunately, we hardly have enough money for this, as the only income we have is what my sons in Lebanon manage to save and send us.

Their work is already fewer in the winter months, and they both send a maximum of 20,000 SYP. We cut through a lot of extra expenses. We don’t give the children any money

to buy snacks or other children food. I repeat to them that our priorities are the general meal for the whole family and the water.”

The absence of electricity heavily affected the daily life in the area. After the sunset, movement is restricted, especially for women and children. People can’t use electrical machines, and they depend on lighting from solar chargers, which they received when they were in the Kurdish controlled area. On winter days without sun, people often depend on candles.

Um Ahmad 10-year-old grandson Mohammad, commented: “I usually try to finish all my homeworks before the sunset as there is no light in our home. Sometimes my eyes get sore and tired after studying in dim lighting, and I always need someone to accompany me to the bathroom at night, I am too scared to go alone.”

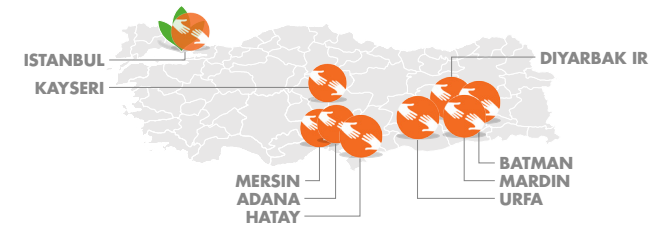








# TURKEY



More than three and a half million Syrian refugees are still settled in Turkey. After more than nine years of conflict, the care needs of refugees are increasing. A few thousands are still living in seven remaining camps or temporary accommodation centres located in five provinces in the south east of Turkey; the rest are located within host communities and many living in big cities. While both international organisations and the Turkish government offer multi-sectoral assistance to refugees across the country, refugees face difficulties accessing humanitarian support and public services. There has been a significant change in the second half of 2019 following the offensive launched by Turkey in northeast Syria, which may represent a major campaign to push the refugees back to Syria.

The regulatory environment for non-governmental organisations has been a major constraint for EU humanitarian partners. While the situation has improved, as a number of NGOs was granted registration mid-January 2020,

it is still difficult for some partners. NGOs face difficulties receiving permits and authorisations both at national and local level, including registration and work permits for refugees and other foreign staff as well as some restrictions on conducting household visits, outreach, psycho-social support, and case management, limiting the availability of real-time household level data to inform programming.

In 2019, we focused on strengthening partnership approach with our Turkish counterpart Support to Life (STL), including a stronger focus on localisation. This approach comes from long-time engagement with STL, which started in 2011 with a joint initiative of emergency response to the effects of the Van earthquake that developed into mutual capacity strengthening directed towards the Syrian refugee crisis that ever since involves Turkey.

**Support to Life** is a Turkish organisation committed to supporting communities affected by disasters and emergencies

by partnering with humanitarian NGOs and donors. Since 2011, Action Against Hunger Spain has been working with Support to Life, and recently started to explore how this partnership could be modelled and piloted as an example of localisation and partnership which could provide learning for the future.

Action Against Hunger and Support to Life came together for a workshop to further explore and formalise this relationship. The purpose was to ensure a shared vision and mutual understanding of the value of being partners. The Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR) Localisation Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF) was used to evaluate whether localisation commitments had been achieved. This tool shaped an action plan and to the development of a partnership-monitoring framework for the next two years. The NEAR LPMF tool also provided a framework to divide roles and responsibilities between the two respective organisations.

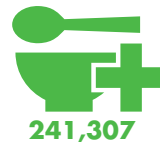








# YEMEN



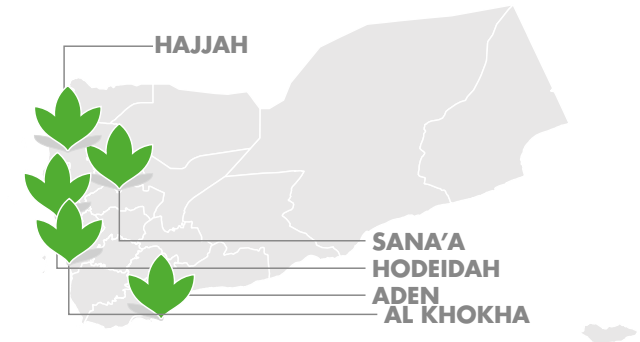
The Yemeni people are facing multiple crises, including armed conflict, displacement, and risk of famine and disease outbreaks, described as the world's worst man-made humanitarian crisis. Four years of ongoing conflict and economic decline have exhausted the population's resilience mechanisms, destroyed infrastructure, and seriously disrupted the country's economy. According to the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan, 24 million people (80% of the population) were in need of humanitarian and protection assistance in 2019. A total of 15.9 million people, more than 50 per cent of the population, are severely food insecure, despite ongoing humanitarian food assistance, and around 16 million are in dire need of clean water, sanitation and hygiene.

In addition, fifty per cent of health facilities are shut, and more than 70 per cent of those that are operational do not have regular supplies of essential medicines. In 2018, Yemen was hit by the worst acute watery diarrhea outbreak in modern history, affecting

close to one million people and its effects reverberating deep into 2019. Over five million children under the age of five in Yemen are facing a heightened threat of acute watery diarrhea.

Action Against Hunger has been implementing multiple interventions to manage crises such as acute watery diarrhea outbreaks and displacement, as well as addressing food security and nutrition needs. Since the beginning of the war in 2015, we have put special emphasis on alleviating the suffering of internally displaced people (IDPs) and vulnerable host communities. As the security and safety situation continues to decline due to the protracted conflict, the living conditions for the already destitute Yemeni population deteriorate further, with families struggling daily to secure basic food.

Maintaining operational presence in some of the worst affected areas of the country and supporting those hardest to reach remained our greatest challenge. We continued our nutrition and health programmes, especially



our support for treating severe and moderate acute malnutrition in children under five and pregnant and lactating women. This also involved training of health workers and sensitisation of vulnerable communities. The latter is of particular importance in light of recent waves of acute watery diarrhea that have affected over one million Yemenis.

Our integrated humanitarian response also covers WaSH programmes through rehabilitation of water points and latrines, hygiene promotion and distribution of hygiene kits. Furthermore, Action Against Hunger implements various food security and livelihoods programming, primarily through distribution of cash-transfers to cover basic food and other needs.



# COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

## PROVIDING LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT IN HODEIDAH

Dalal Sultan Ali Said is a 25 year-old woman from Hodeidah city. She is married and has two children, a two year-old Amgad, and a newborn Mohammed. Only three days after he was born, Mohammed and his mother both contracted acute watery diarrhea, and had to receive treatment in Action Against Hunger's recently rehabilitated Diarrhoea Treatment Centre (DTC) at the Al Thawra hospital in Hodeidah.

Acute watery diarrhea is a bacterial disease usually contracted through unclean, contaminated water. Once it comes into a human body, the disease spreads quickly and causes watery diarrhoea, which can lead to severe dehydration and even death. According to the World Health Organisation, acute watery diarrhea "affects both children and adults, and can kill within hours if left untreated. It takes between 12 hours and five days for a person to show symptoms after ingesting contaminated food or water. Most infected persons show no symptoms; however, the virus is present in their faeces for one to ten days after the infection had taken place. In places where water and sanitation facilities are poorly constructed or don't exist, acute water diarrhea can become highly infectious when the affected faeces are

released back into the environment.

Protracted conflict and collapse of basic services in Yemen have caused massive deterioration in living standards among the population. Dalal and her family have barely been able to survive, with her husband being unemployed and the family without a regular source of income. The family has no other choice but to resort to drinking the contaminated water from the public network.

Dalal was admitted to the DTC only three days after she delivered Mohammed, after displaying signs of severe dehydration. The new mother looked lethargic, measured body temperature below normal values, she was confused and seemed in shock. Acute watery diarrhea was confirmed through laboratory test results. She was immediately referred for treatment and close observation, with a special focus on her ability to regain consciousness. Dalal responded well to the usual rehydration treatment and gradually improved, regaining her consciousness.

On the second day of her treatment, Mohammad was referred to the same health facility in a critical condition displaying signs

of shock, which is one of the most serious complications of dehydration. Mohammed was urgently transferred to the paediatric emergency unit to receive immediate rehydration treatment, and remained under close supervision of the team. 24 hours later, Mohammed was moved to the paediatric Intensive Care Unit for further treatment. He responded well to treatment, and two weeks into his stay at the DTC, Mohammed could be discharged back home.

Dalal and Mohammed are only two among many acute water diarrhea infections in Hodeidah and in Yemen. Swift action to advance their treatment demonstrates how acutely needed such lifesaving services in Hodeidah and in Yemen are. The treatment team working in the DTC is trained and supported by Action Against Hunger. Testing and treatment is free of charge for anyone who comes to the centre, which is crucial for the population impoverished by the years of conflict.

The DTC in Hodeidah is the main referral health facility for diarrhoea treatment for four governorates. Because of high demand, Action Against Hunger decided to modify the status of the DTC from temporary to permanent, so as to















**FOR FOOD.**  
**AGAINST**  
**HUNGER**  
**AND**  
**MALNUTRITION.**

**FOR CLEAN**  
**WATER.**  
**AGAINST KILLER**  
**DISEASES.**

**FOR CHILDREN**  
**THAT GROW**  
**UP STRONG.**  
**AGAINST LIVES**  
**CUT SHORT.**

**FOR CROPS**  
**THIS YEAR,**  
**AND NEXT.**  
**AGAINST**  
**DROUGHT**  
**AND DISASTER.**

**FOR CHANGING**  
**MINDS.**  
**AGAINST**  
**IGNORANCE**  
**AND**  
**INDIFFERENCE.**

**FOR FREEDOM**  
**FROM HUNGER.**  
**FOR EVERYONE.**  
**FOR GOOD.**

**FOR ACTION.**  
**AGAINST**  
**HUNGER.**

