
Partners

Story

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Helping the World Food Programme ship food into war-torn Syria

Eight long years of war in Syria have left 11 million women, children and men unable to survive without lifesaving aid. They rely on humanitarian aid to meet their basic needs – food, water shelter. Bashar Shehadeh is a Syrian UN Volunteer Logistics Officer from Damascus volunteering with the World Food Programme (WFP) in Lebanon. With six years of experience in logistics, he is helping to speed up the delivery of life-saving food to conflict-ridden areas inside Syria.



UN Volunteer Logistics Officer Bashar Shehadeh, from Damascus, Syria, serves with WFP in Lebanon, checking shipping documents and liaising with suppliers, authorities and custom agents along the Lebanese and Syrian borders.

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In Syria, 3.5 million of 6.5 million food-insecure Syrians receive food rations every month from the World Food Programme. Every month, WFP uses over 4,600 trucks to deliver emergency food assistance to more than 1,300 distribution points in all of Syria's 14 governorates.

Through regular monthly food deliveries, WFP provides a family of five with a box of food containing staple food items such as bulgur wheat, lentils, rice, wheat flour, canned food, salt, sugar and cooking oil. For families not reachable from inside Syria, WFP runs a cross-border operation from Turkey to deliver life-saving food and other humanitarian items on behalf of other agencies.

At the heart of this colossal operation are UN Volunteers like Bashar Shehadeh, who helps make things happen. The 39-year old Syrian national from Damascus works around the clock to ensure food shipments are handled promptly and with care.

Checking shipping documents, liaising with suppliers, authorities and custom agents along the Lebanese and Syrian borders, Shehadeh knows speed is of the essence – getting the food cargo into Syria quickly so that it reaches people in need.

Delay is not an option. We move quickly to keep the supply chain cycle rolling to catch the food distributions on time. Millions of Syrians depend on WFP food assistance and we work to deliver in a predictable and regular manner. --Bashar Shehadeh, UN Volunteer Logistics Officer with WFP, Lebanon

Bashar has extensive professional experience in logistics, procurement and overseas import into Syria. He joined WFP in March 2013 until August 2017, when he decided to apply to become a UN Volunteer.

Shipping food into Syria is vital to the continuation of WFP's food assistance programmes in the country. Besides distributing food assistance to three million people across the country, WFP runs a school meals programme that reaches 660,000 school-aged children. Meanwhile, 2.1 million children remain out of school and need to be educated if they are to have a future.

WFP also runs a nutrition programme distributing nutritional supplements to prevent and treat malnutrition in children under the age of two. Around 30,000 women receive fresh food vouchers in addition to their food rations to improve their diets.

WFP's Bashar Shehadeh also works to build the capacity of Lebanese suppliers, with the hopes of helping to turn Lebanon into a recognizable hub for sending food and humanitarian assistance by UN agencies into Syria. "I am trying to contribute," Bashar explains, "in engaging Lebanese traders to start exporting food commodities from Lebanon into Syria, instead of importing them from third countries."

"WFP succeeded to launch the first wheat flour tender from Lebanon, amounting to 2,270 MT from Lebanese suppliers, which have already reached WFP warehouses in Syria," Bashar shares.

I am motivated by many ideas. I want to give back to the community, I enjoy using my skills, I like to meet like-minded people, and I crave to ease my peoples' suffering. --Bashar Shehadeh

With world leaders gathered in Brussels for a conference about the future of Syria, the World Food Programme (WFP) appeals for continued donor support.

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 2: Zero hunger](#), [SDG 10: Reduced inequalities](#), [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)

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