



WHEN AND FOR HOW LONG?

Humanitarian action may be characterised as short-term emergency response but this is rarely the case. Sudden-onset disasters and protracted crises often overlap in the same contexts, as do people's acute and chronic needs and their ongoing vulnerabilities. While rapid response to the acute phase of an emergency has been described as the 'mission critical,' in practice humanitarian action has a broad scope including 'during and in the aftermath of emergencies' as well as 'preparedness and prevention'.¹

The 2011 Horn of Africa famine prompted renewed focus and commitments on early action to respond to warning signs as part of a broader effort to build resilience. By definition, crisis response is already too late and early warning and early action demand the investment of resources beyond humanitarian. This includes investment in development activities, social safety-net schemes and insurance mechanisms to respond to triggers, such as the African Risk Capacity. However, in the event of rapid onset or rapid escalation of a crisis, swift allocation and disbursements of humanitarian funds are critical and there are several rapid response funds designed to expedite this.

While required to facilitate a rapid response, the bulk of humanitarian assistance goes to the same countries year after year. Two-thirds of all international humanitarian assistance from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors alone went to such long-term recipient countries in 2013. Of the 20 largest recipients of humanitarian assistance that year, 19 were long- or medium-term DAC recipients, raising questions about both the models of humanitarian financing and the targeting of other resources, notably development assistance.

The UN-coordinated appeals are adapting to this reality. Just two years after the introduction of the first multi-year appeal in 2013, there were 13 such appeals by March 2015. These now account for 39% of all requirements within the UN appeals. The Sahel crisis appeals and the Syria Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) have dominated these requirements, impelled by the need to address the very different challenges of chronic food insecurities and protracted displacement. Announced as a 'paradigm shift' from previous UN-coordinated appeals, the Syria 3RP explicitly builds on the national response plans of the refugee-hosting countries and seeks to bring together national and international, development and humanitarian, capacities and resources.

Early action

Responding to the first signs of a crisis not only saves lives and prevents escalation, it can also be cost-effective.² The fatal consequences of the late response to the Horn of Africa famine and food crisis in 2011 prompted widespread consensus on the critical importance of early action. Early warning and risk monitoring tools are increasingly able to predict, identify and communicate impending or emerging crises.³ In the face of multiple crises which are both large-scale and severe, however, it can be challenging to mobilise funding at scale for those which are not yet either.

Part of a broader resilience approach, early warning and early action demand the investment of resources beyond humanitarian, including in development activities, social protection and safety-net schemes, and insurance mechanisms. Arguably, humanitarian response will by definition be too late, needed only when these other mechanisms are absent or insufficient to match the type or scale of events. So, early action requires a dual approach: scaling up of long-term financing for risk and vulnerability (see Chapter 8); and contingency mechanisms for deploying rapid humanitarian assistance where and when it is necessary.

Both kinds of response require a clear set of triggers for early action. The 2014 Intergovernmental Authority on Development Second Summit on Drought Resilience⁴ repeated previous calls for a common system among donors for agreeing and responding to early warning triggers.⁵ While such a global system has not been developed, there are individual initiatives that do respond to some form of trigger, including crisis modifiers, contingency funds and risk-financing mechanisms.

While much early warning innovation has focused on weather-related events, which can be linked to meteorological triggers, early warning and action for conflict remains more difficult, for both technical and

RISK FINANCING FOR EARLY RESPONSE – AFRICAN RISK CAPACITY

Launched in May 2014 by the African Union (AU), the African Risk Capacity (ARC) is a specialised agency which uses risk-pooling and risk-transfer mechanisms to respond to early warning signs of disaster. ARC estimates that a large-scale drought in sub-Saharan Africa can cost upwards of US\$3 billion in emergency response⁶ and lack of funding for early action has cost lives, reversed development gains and undermined resilience by depleting assets.

The ARC risk pool is informed by data from the Africa RiskView (ARV), an early warning system which monitors both levels of food-security needs and drought response costs across 32 African countries. ARV combines weather and crop data with data on vulnerable populations and historic analysis of the costs of response. Payouts to ARC policy-holding governments are triggered when the estimated response costs cross a certain pre-defined threshold.

ARC has provided drought insurance up to a limit of US\$30 million to five

African countries (Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal), with three of these (Senegal, Niger and Mauritania) receiving their first payouts in January 2015 totalling US\$25 million.⁷ According to the World Food Programme (WFP), “The payouts were released even before an appeal for and to the Sahel was even formulated.”⁸

A number of donors, including the development agencies of the UK, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland,⁹ have supported the ARC, partnering the agency in the design phase and providing funds. However, the long-term ambition is for it to be exclusively financed by African governments.

The ARC aims to increase the number of member countries and the scope of its disaster coverage. Immediate plans are to extend the initiative to cover cyclones and flooding; in response to the Ebola crisis, it is also developing coverage to be launched in 2017 for disease outbreaks and epidemics.

political reasons. The Ebola crisis response also failed to act at scale to early warning signs (see Chapter 3). Although Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) sounded the alert in March 2014, the World Health Organization announced the emergency only in August, slowed down by technical, political and institutional factors.

Rapid response

Rapid response to acute emergencies has been described as the 'mission critical' core of humanitarian action. Timely funding is essential in the sudden onset or escalation of a crisis, and a number of fast-track mechanisms have been created to expedite normal decision-making and disbursement processes. In the past two years, the capacity for rapid response has been tested in very different ways and contexts – including in response to the conflict in Iraq, to Typhoon Haiyan and to Ebola.

At a global level, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) (see Chapter 5) includes a rapid response window that can allocate funding of up to US\$30 million to an emergency. This aims to enable time-critical response to a sudden onset emergency or to rapid deterioration of a crisis, and activities funded by this window must be completed within six months. In 2014 it made 360 grants, allocating nearly US\$291 million¹⁰ through this window (63% of its total allocations that year in line with an average of 65% in the last five years).

The Start Fund¹¹ (see also Chapter 9), funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Irish Aid, has a much smaller capacity (up to GBP£30 million (US\$49 million) over three years) but funds NGOs directly and specifies that funding should be disbursed within 72 hours and spent within 45 days. At country level, RAPID, the NGO-led fund in Pakistan, funded by USAID, takes an average of nine to ten days to disburse to local, national and international NGOs.¹²

Many government donors also have their own rapid response mechanisms (RRMs). These include fast-tracking through pre-positioned funding with Red Cross and Red Crescent societies or NGOs, and pre-negotiated draw-down agreements with accredited partners that can be quickly activated. These were used in response to Typhoon Haiyan and included £5 million from DFID disbursed through pre-selected NGOs.¹³

These UN, NGO and government donor mechanisms are important both to enable specific agencies to respond quickly and sometimes to prompt other donors to respond. However, their net effect is not at sufficient scale to enable a rapid response to all identified needs and entirely counterbalance slower or sporadic funding. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 show that in the case of Ukraine, a rise in funding was prompted by the launch of the flash appeal, but was not sustained at these levels. In the case of Iraq, funding flows remained low despite the escalating situation until Saudi Arabia contributed US\$500 million in July 2014 (see Chapter 3).

SWEDEN'S RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM

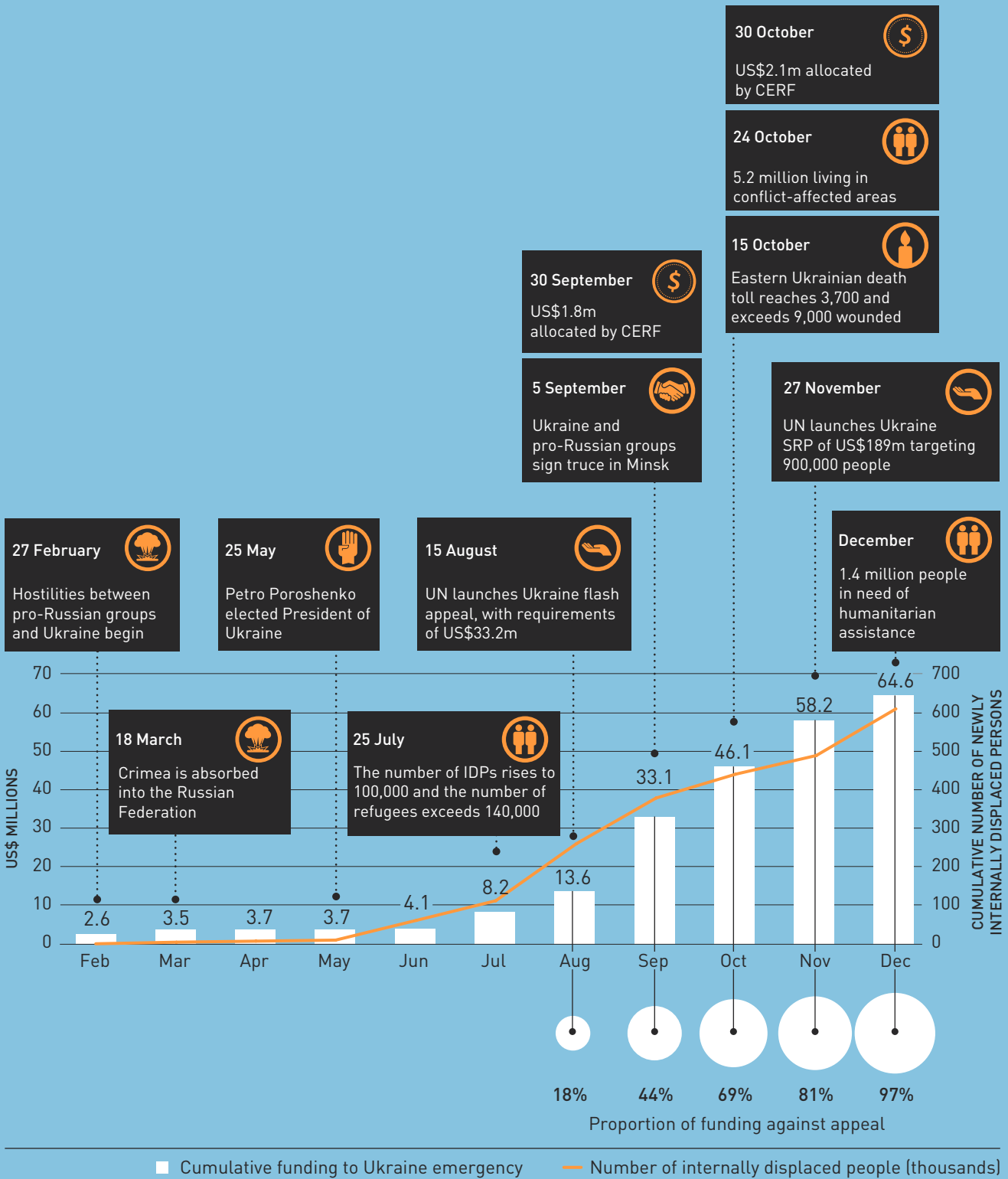
Sweden's development cooperation agency Sida is one of a number of donors that has an RRM. The Sida RRM pre-positions funding with Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and with NGOs. RRM partners are pre-selected according to a defined set of quality and capacity criteria, and then allocated funding annually, which they can draw down as required for rapid response. In 2014, the Sida RRM allocated a total of US\$35.5 million to 11 pre-selected partners.

DATA POVERTY: REAL-TIME REPORTING

Fast-moving humanitarian crises require rapid decision-making and disbursement. Reporting of pledges, commitments and disbursements therefore needs to be available and monitored in real time in order to understand and respond to the changing picture of funding flows and gaps (see Chapter 9). The UN OCHA FTS provides the most up-to-date data, but can only ever be as fast as the speed at which information is reported by donors or agencies – which can often create a time-lag.

FIGURE 7.1

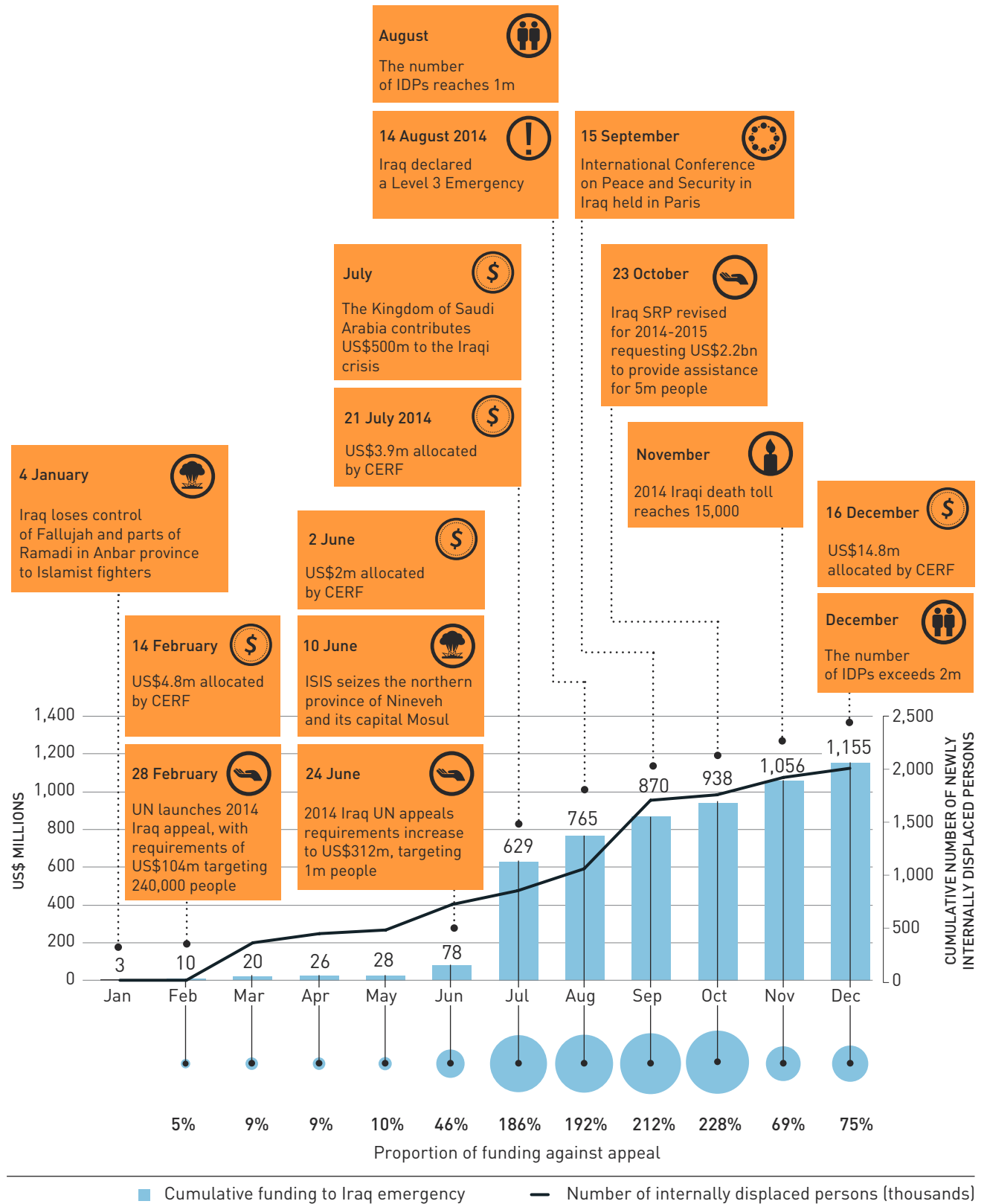
Timing of international humanitarian funding response to Ukraine, February to December 2014



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS and IDMC data, UN OCHA, UNHCR, humanitarianresponse.info platform and media reports. Note: Funding data in current prices. IDP, internally displaced persons. SRP, strategic response plan.

FIGURE 7.2

Timing of international humanitarian funding response to Iraq, January to December 2014



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS and IOM data, and UN OCHA and media reports.
 Notes: Funding data is in current prices. Reduced levels of funding against appeal needs in November and December are due to the appeal being revised upwards at the end of October 2014.

Long- and medium-term humanitarian response

Humanitarian assistance may be required to respond quickly but it is rarely a short-term intervention. The majority goes to the same countries year after year, due to recurrent or chronic crises, often continuing to provide basic goods and services where other international or national investments are absent.

In 2013, two-thirds (66%) of official humanitarian assistance from DAC donors went to long-term recipients, that is those that had been in receipt of an above-average share of their ODA in the form of humanitarian assistance for eight years or more. A further 23% went to medium-term recipients – those meeting the same criteria for between three and seven years.

Long-term recipients are also often the largest recipients – of the 30 long-term and 28 medium-term recipient countries, 19 were among the 20 largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance in 2013.

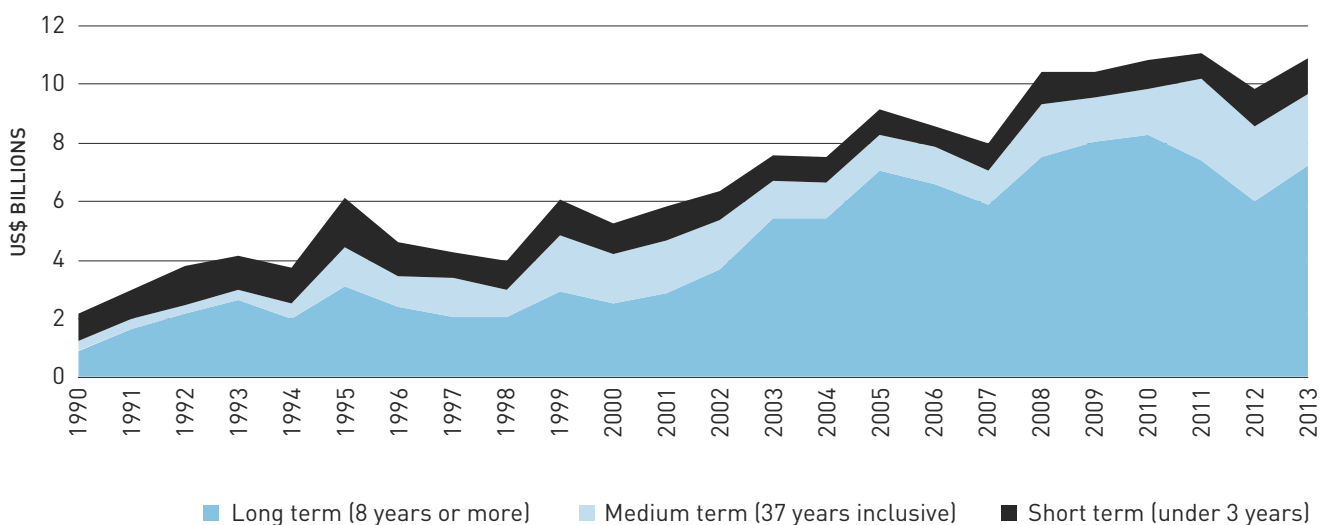
The three largest recipients of international humanitarian assistance in 2013 – Syria, oPt, and Sudan – are all long-term recipients.

A country may be a long-term recipient for a number of reasons, including chronic or recurrent conflict and insecurity, protracted displacement, recurrent disasters caused by natural hazards, or a complex mix of all of these. For example, Pakistan is a long-term recipient due to a protracted refugee situation and recurrent flooding over the past ten years, while Kenya is also in this group as it has hosted a protracted refugee population, suffered recurrent droughts and experienced several incidences of internal conflict.

Many medium- and long-term recipients of humanitarian assistance are countries with high poverty rates and low levels of domestic public resources (see also Chapter 8).

FIGURE 7.3

Long-, medium- and short-term recipients of official humanitarian assistance from DAC donors, 1990–2013



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC and UN CERF data.

Notes: Long-, medium- or short-term classification is determined by the length of time the country has received an above-average share of its ODA in the form of humanitarian assistance. Calculations are based on shares of country-allocable humanitarian assistance.

Of the 19 medium- and long-term recipients that featured among the 20 largest humanitarian recipients in 2013, 8 had over a third of their population living in extreme poverty. In Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) this was as high as 84%. Average government expenditure per person to these 19 countries stood at PPP\$997 in 2013, significantly lower than the average government expenditure per person to all other developing countries of PPP\$2,444 in the same year.¹⁴ However, as Chapters 1 and 8 note, in many of these contexts, national (let alone sub-national) poverty and expenditure data is missing or pre-dates crises – Syria and Somalia being prime examples.

The fact that so much humanitarian assistance goes to long- and medium-term recipients presents a challenge to both humanitarian and development financing. Many donors do offer flexible multi-year funding arrangements to allow agencies to plan and resource long- and medium-term programming and avoid damaging effects of unpredictable single-year funding, and this should be the norm in long-term recipient countries.

Overall, non-humanitarian ODA does exceed humanitarian assistance (see Figure 7.4) to these countries, with the exception of Sudan, Syria, and the Philippines. However, in some countries where non-humanitarian ODA sums are greater at the national level, at the sub-national level humanitarian assistance may

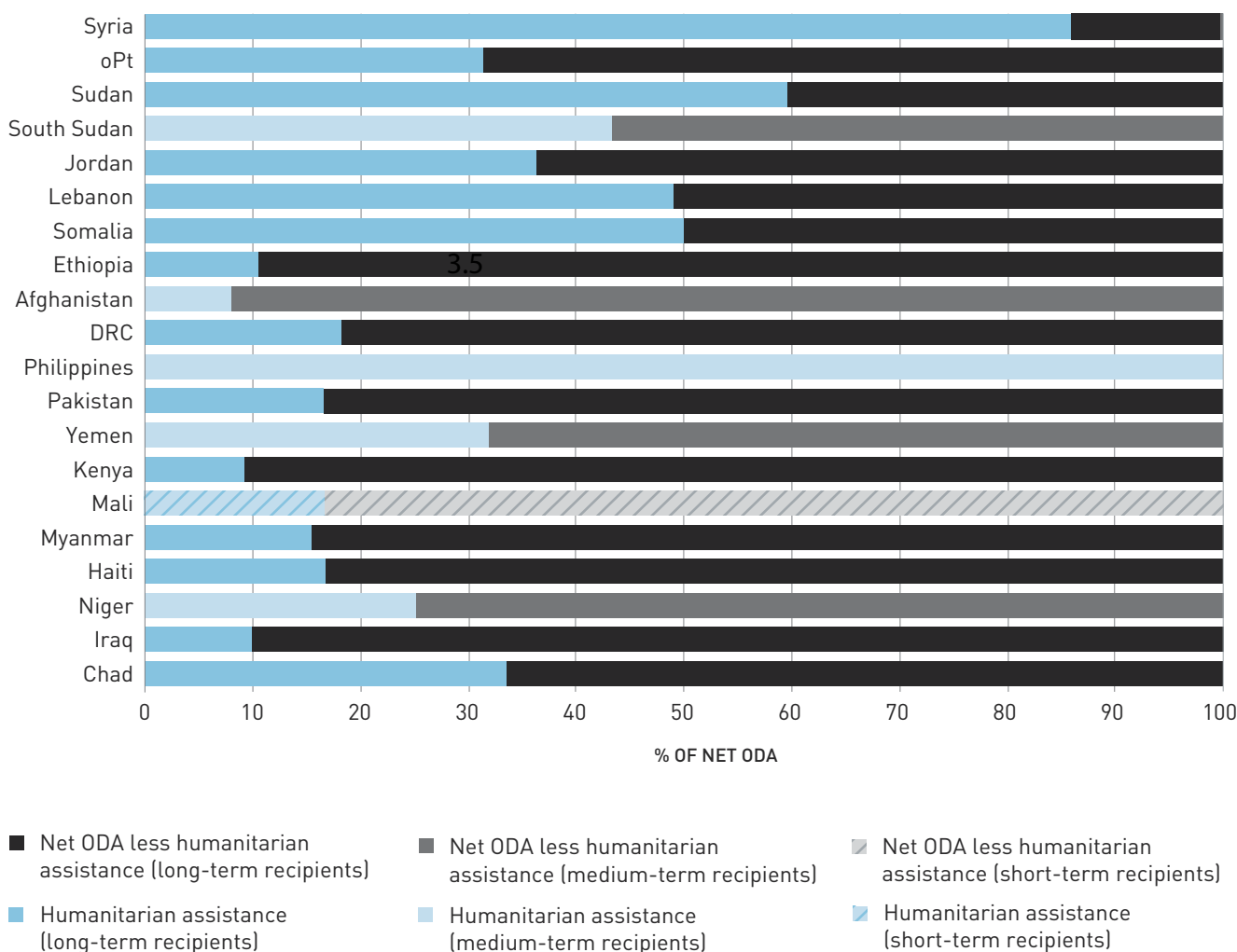
In 2013, two-thirds (66%) of official humanitarian assistance from DAC donors went to long-term recipients, and a further 23% went to medium-term recipients

be providing basic services or be a substitute for social protection in the absence of other national or international resources. As Chapter 8 shows, greater investments – including of development assistance – are required to provide more suitable and sustainable solutions. A recent World Bank and Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiative on ‘making the links work’ between relief and development¹⁵ recommended finding convergences between multi-year humanitarian funding and development assistance, as well as using the establishment of social safety-net programmes as part of “an incremental exit strategy for humanitarian assistance” and to prevent recurrent humanitarian crises.

FIGURE 7.4

Official humanitarian assistance to 20 largest recipients as percentage of net ODA, 2013

For long-, medium- and short-term recipients



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC, UN OCHA FTS, UN CERF and IMF WEO data.

Notes: Humanitarian assistance refers to official humanitarian assistance from DAC countries and the EU; ODA is from DAC countries and multi-laterals. Countries are ordered from top to bottom by amount of international humanitarian assistance received in 2013. ODA is net and excludes debt relief; humanitarian assistance to the Philippines was larger than net ODA due to high levels of ODA repayments in 2013.

Multi-year appeals and multi-year funding

UN-coordinated appeals had, until 2013, always been for one year or less, driving short-term contributions to their projects even when appeals for the same crises were launched year on year. The first multi-year appeal, for three years for Somalia, was launched in December 2012, reflecting a longer-term resilience approach after lessons learned from the 2011 famine. In 2014, 14 more appeals followed suit.

By March 2015, there were 13 current multi-year appeals. Ten of these relate to the Sahel: the Sahel regional response plans and the nine specific country appeals within the region (for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal). The multi-year appeal for Somalia is also still active, and is joined by a new multi-year appeal for Yemen and the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP – see page 102). Iraq and South Sudan have reverted to single-year

appeals – situations in both countries rapidly deteriorated in 2014 and necessitated frequent appeal revisions and a focus on immediate acute needs, to the extent that multi-year planning became difficult. All of the 2015 multi-year appeals have a strong focus on resilience.

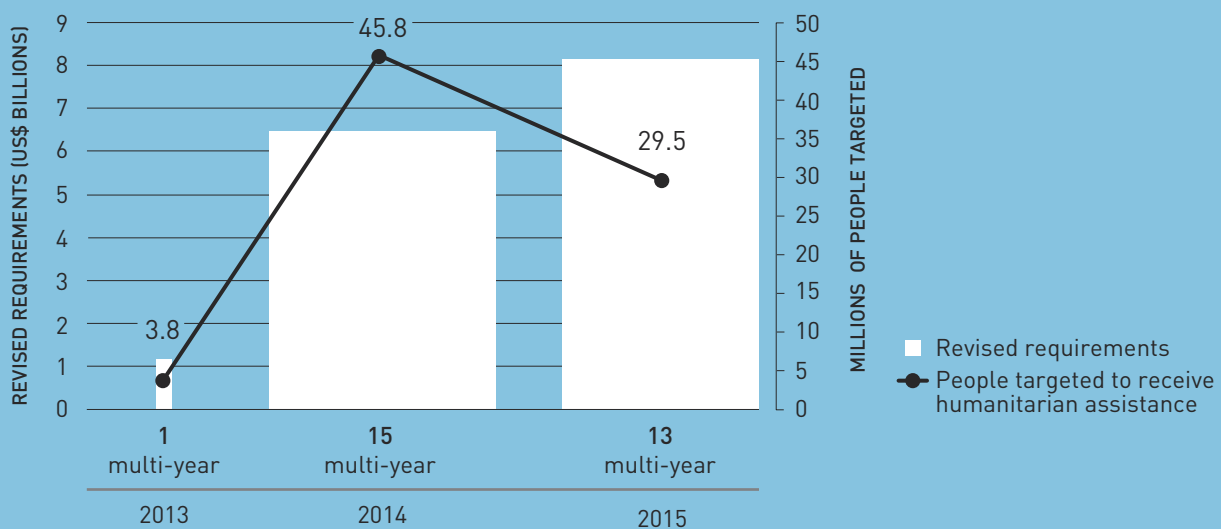
The needs covered by these multi-year appeals represent a significant proportion of total needs in all UN-coordinated humanitarian appeals. In 2014, 45.8 million people – nearly 52% of the total number of people targeted for assistance – were covered under multi-year appeals.¹⁶ In financial terms, these appeals requested 33% (US\$6.5 billion) of the total 2014 requirements in the appeals. By March 2015, this had risen to US\$8.1 billion (39% of the total), a figure dominated by the requirements of the Syria 3RP (see Figure 7.6) and which may rise as the appeals continue to be revised upwards. All of the multi-year

appeals present their requirements on an annual basis but revise them as necessary in the course of the year.

Current reporting systems record only donor contributions disbursed within a single year, and do not indicate whether these were made as part of overarching multi-year agreements. Therefore it is hard to know if there has been an increase in donors' tendency to provide multi-year funding agreements, in step with the increase in multi-year appeals. As analysis in the GHA Report 2014 showed,¹⁷ a number of donors were providing multi-year funding to Somalia, and several also do so for the Sahel, although the Sahel Regional SRP noted that "more predictable, multi-year funding remains an elusive goal, the case for which is all the more compelling for a 3 year Sahel humanitarian strategy with a strong resilience theme."¹⁸

FIGURE 7.5

Number of multi-year UN-coordinated appeals, their revised requirements, and number of people targeted to receive humanitarian assistance, 2013–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on UN OCHA FTS data and UN-coordinated appeals.

Notes: 2015 figures are subject to change and correspond to May 2015. Does not include 2015 SRP for Djibouti, which was expected to issue as a multi-year SRP at the time of writing. Change from consolidated appeals process (CAP) to strategic response plan (SRP) reflects the change in system for UN-coordinated appeals from 2013–2014.

In focus: Syria – resilience and protracted refugee crises

The scale of the displacement from Syria and the apparent intractability of the conflict have renewed international attention to the need for durable political and economic solutions for refugees. Resilience initiatives had hitherto largely focused on the droughts and famines of the Horn of Africa and Sahel. In 2014 however, resilience became a framing concept for the Syria refugee response with the launch of the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). This called for a “new aid architecture” to respond to the needs of displaced people and their host communities, and to address the “massive structural impact of the crisis”¹⁹ on countries in the region.

The 3RP explicitly builds on national response plans and seeks to bring together national and international, development and humanitarian, capacities and resources. It also calls on international donors to provide both humanitarian and development funding, stating that “This crisis demands that we break down financing silos.”

The 3RP covers the five Syrian refugee-hosting countries in the region – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey – and sets out requirements of US\$5.5 billion for 2015, US\$4.5 billion of which is for agency requirements. Unlike the Somalia and Sahel response plans, where resilience activities are integrated into sectoral needs, the 3RP has two components, for each of refugees and for resilience.²⁰

The refugee component aims to address the protection and assistance needs of refugees inside and outside camps, and the most vulnerable members of affected communities. This represents 72% of the total funding requirements.

The resilience component aims to address the resilience and stabilisation needs of affected communities; build national and sub-national service delivery capacity; and strengthen the ability of governments to lead the response. This represents 28% of the total funding requirements.

Of the five countries, Lebanon accounts for the largest volume of requirements under the plan at almost US\$2.1 billion (US\$2 billion for agency requirements only), 34% of which is marked for resilience.²¹ The effect on the Lebanese economy of hosting Syrian refugees between 2012 and 2014 has been to depress government revenue collection by US\$1.5 billion while simultaneously increasing government expenditure by US\$1.1 billion due to the surge in demand for public services.²²

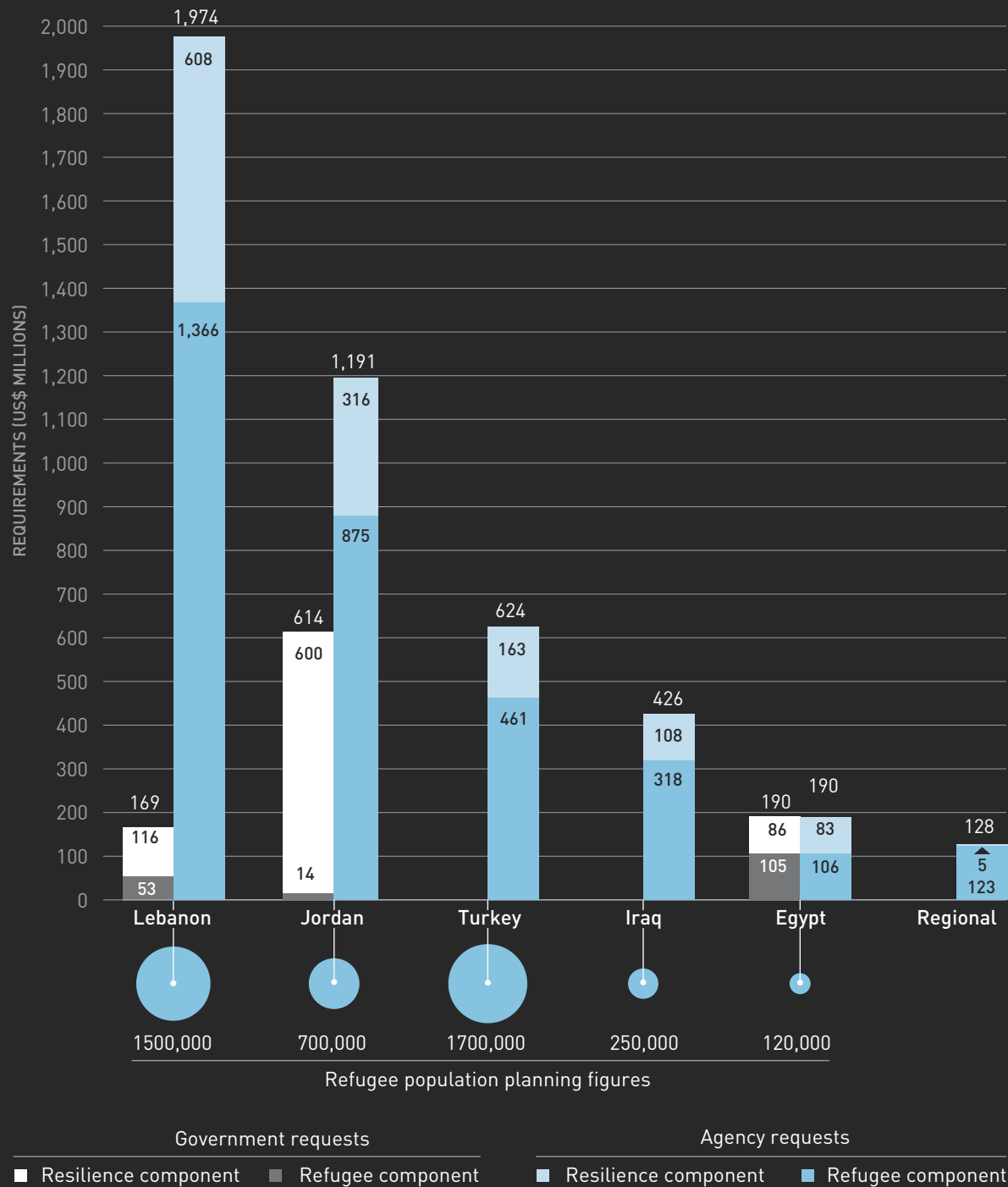
As explored in Chapter 3, the significant contribution from the Turkish government meant that although the country hosted the largest number of refugees, the agency requirements for international humanitarian assistance were lower. There were no Turkish government requests for the resilience or the refugee component.

As the 3RP calls for development and humanitarian funding, tracking the pledges, commitments and disbursements against it is complex. As Chapter 9 explains, a new initiative to track both humanitarian and development funding is being piloted to address this challenge.

In 2014, resilience became a framing concept for the Syria refugee response with the launch of the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). This called for a 'new aid architecture.'

FIGURE 7.6

Humanitarian agency and domestic government requests for resilience in the Syria 3RP, and refugee numbers by country



Source: Development Initiatives based on Syria 3RP.

Notes: The data in this chart equals total funding requests for the Syria 3RP. This includes government and agency requests. For Egypt, requests came from the Ministries of Health and Education. Requests for Lebanon came from the Ministries of Education, Higher Education, Energy and Water, Agriculture, Public Health and Social Affairs. There was no breakdown of ministry requests for Jordan – government agency request figures have been calculated by subtracting total requests by agency requests.