

Minutes of Meeting Lebanon Response Plan Partners' Update Meeting

Meeting Location	Remotely Via Zoom	Meeting Date	13 Dec 2024
Chairperson(s)	Dr. Ola Boutros, LRP General Supervisor (MoSA) Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR) Elena Ferrari, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP) Makiha Kimura, Head of Coordination (OCHA)	Meeting Time	10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared by	Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant (UNHCR)	Meeting Duration	2.00 hrs.
Participants	240+ participants from the Government of Lebanon (GoL), UN Agencies, NGOs, and CSOs.		
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Remarks 2. Update on the Refugee Situation 3. LRP 2025 Planning 4. Thematic Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection • Socio-Economic • Social Tensions • Access to Services 5. AoB 6. Closing Remarks 		

1. Opening Remarks

Dr. Ola Boutros, LRP General Supervisor (MoSA)
Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)
Elena Ferrari, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)
Makiha Kimura, Head of Coordination (OCHA)

In their opening remarks, the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) Co-Chairs welcomed the participants, presented the agenda, and shared updates on the border crossings and new displacements noting that 124 collective shelters are hosting 602 families (30,799 individuals), primarily displaced Syrians, and that approximately 25,000 Lebanese returnees are now residing in host communities. Emphasis was placed on addressing vulnerabilities across all populations.

2. Update on the Refugee Situation

Juliette Stevenson, Senior External Relations Officer (UNHCR)

Juliette Stevenson provided an update on the current refugee situation:

- LRP remains vital as a coordination, assistance, and resource mobilization tool across all populations.
- Coordination structure has enabled strong responses to pressing needs and adaptability during mass displacement.
- The situation in Lebanon remains fragile with hopes for lasting peace, noting that flexibility and adaptability are required in response strategies.
- Continued commitment and flexibility of resources from donors are essential to address transitions and community needs. This includes support for Lebanese returning from displacement and refugees.
- Monumental shifts are occurring in Syria, with anticipation of positive changes and stabilization after so many years of war.
- Millions of Syrians feel hopeful yet cautious about the immediate and long-term future. Some are making definitive decisions to return, others are opting to “go and see” to

inform their choices, and many are still evaluating the safety and of return options or waiting for improved conditions.

- Border crossings at Masnaa remain active, with humanitarian actors providing support.
- Conditions at Syrian immigration posts remain unstable, complicating cross-border movements.
- Advocacy for returns to be voluntary, safe, and dignified.
- The humanitarian community stands ready to assist in creating conducive environments and supporting Syrians in need this transitional period.

3. LRP 2025 Planning

Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)

Stephanie Laba discussed the planning assumptions, context assumptions, LRP terminology, and updated planning timeline:

- The planning assumptions focus on addressing immediate and medium-term needs through adaptive, localized, and cross-sectoral strategies, ensuring operational readiness, alignment with regional frameworks, and flexibility to respond to evolving crises and funding constraints. Further details on slide 7 [here](#).
- Prioritization of localized recovery (not large-scale reconstruction).
- Plan for a key review moment ('gatekeeper moment') in Q1-2025 where strategies might be adjusted based on potential displacement waves if the ceasefire fails.
- The context assumptions highlight ongoing socio-economic and environmental challenges, displacement dynamics, regional instability, and risks to infrastructure and inter-communal relations, emphasizing the need for adaptive planning amid escalating vulnerabilities and geopolitical uncertainties. Further details on slides 9 and 10 [here](#).
- LRP Terminology:
 - **"Displaced Syrians"**: Referring to Syrian nationals in Lebanon.
 - **"Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)"**: Referring to the people displaced within Lebanon.
 - **"Returning IDPs"**: Referring to individuals who have either returned to their original homes or to their area of origin. *This terminology is recommended as conditions for many IDPS are not conducive for sustainable return since many IDPs will continue to have habitual and safety needs.*
 - **"Palestinian refugee from Syria"** and **"Palestine refugee in Lebanon"**.
 - Use **"Persons with Disabilities"** in full instead of PwD.
 - Use **"Gender Based Violence (GBV)"** instead of Sexual & Gender Based Violence (SGBV).
 - Do not use "ITS" or "Informal Tented Settlement" but **"informal settlement"** (no tented, no acronym and not capitalized).
- Sectors will submit their strategies and log frames by 20 December 2024. They will be finalized by Sector Leads (including at ministerial level with line ministries) by 31 December 2024. The LRP appeal will be launched in January 2025. Please refer to the full planning timeline on slide 11 [here](#).

Makiha Kimura, Head of Coordination (OCHA)

Makiha Kimura highlighted scope and planning under the Flash Appeal (FA):

- Timeframe from January to March 2025 (3 months).
- Focuses on immediate life-saving interventions (not all humanitarian responses).
- Targets ~900,000 displaced individuals and ~80,000 hard-to-reach populations.

- Target at the national level ONLY, no district level breakdown.
- No population groups breakdown for target at planning stage (but could be monitored with disaggregation).
- Need for clear strategy to ensure linkage of LRP and FA (shift, exit strategy of FA) in sector strategy.
- There is no FA-specific PiN; only the LRP PiN, with a distinct caseload for FA targets and budget. FA and LRP targets are complementary and not mutually exclusive.
- FA budget will top up LRP funding, ensuring no duplication.
- This is “extension” of the current FA – light touch of update/revision based on the current FA (Oct-Dec 2024).

4. Thematic Discussions

Focal Points presented on each thematic area as follows:

Protection

Sophie Etzold, Protection and GBV Sector Coordinator (UNHCR)

- Protection risks may decrease if widespread armed conflict does not resume; may persist due to strained resources, legal gaps for refugees, inadequate shelter, and unequal access to services; and may worsen due to economic impact, social tensions, and increased exploitation.
- Key Protection Risks include:
 - **Risk 1: Safety and displacement risks due to armed conflict:** including risks of injuries and exposure from UXO, impact of exposure to violence and attacks, limited shelter options and increased vulnerabilities resulting in increase of psychosocial needs.
 - **Risk 2: Communal tensions and unequal access to services and rights for those at heightened risk:** concerns around return, tensions in relation to resources and services such as shelter, health education, legal and civil documentation.
 - **Risk 3: Increased violence, abuse and exploitation:** displacement, lack of livelihood options, socio-economic constraints, communal tensions and social norms all increase risks of full range of violence, abuse and exploitation for those who remained in conflict affected areas, those returning and those who remain displaced.
- Programmatic adaptations call for prioritizing community-based programming, re-establishing protection in safe areas, and urgently scaling up protection activities such as UXO awareness, service referrals, and support to local NGOs.
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV):
 - Women face heightened risks (exploitation, forced marriage) during displacement and returns.
 - Emphasis on gender-sensitive programming, economic recovery, and enhanced GBV mitigation.
- Child Protection:
 - Children represent a significant portion of the displaced population.
 - Critical needs include education to prevent child labor, mental health services, and UXO safety awareness.
 - Protection risks are exacerbated by unsafe infrastructure and displacement-related violence.

Socio-Economic

Abdallah Souhani, Head of Research (WFP)

- Lebanon's GDP contracted by 64% since 2018, inflation remains high, and monetary poverty has tripled to 44% of the population.
- Over 1.3 million people have been directly displaced or affected by the escalation of hostilities, with damages since October 2023 totaling up to \$3.4 billion and displacement remaining significant, including 881,000 recorded IDPs.
- The country's GDP shrinkage is projected at 9.2% in 2024 due to the escalation of hostilities. The Lebanese Pound remains at LBP 89,700/USD, supported by Central Bank interventions and inflation dropped from 209% to 33% by September 2024, though food and service prices remain high.
- Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face severe disruptions; 45% of businesses temporarily closed but plan to resume post-conflict.
- Remittances and informal employment are the primary sources of income to the country.
- Challenges include conflict continuation, unreliable dollar availability, and high unemployment among vulnerable families.
- Despite the conflict, wheat and bread supply has been relatively stable, with stock coverage for 3-5 months for essential items, noting that bread prices rose significantly following subsidy lifts.
- The WFP Market Functionality Index highlights Lebanon's unequal market performance, particularly in conflict-affected districts. While some areas show resilience, others face severe disruptions. Fiscal deficits, monetary instability, and global financial risks (e.g., grey listing) compound Lebanon's economic fragility. Details are available in the Market Monitor – August 2024 [here](#).
- Tourism, housing, commerce, and agriculture sectors are profoundly affected and the overall outlook calls for immediate intervention to stabilize markets, supply chains, and fiscal systems.
- Lebanon is facing major economic risks including fiscal challenges like emergency expenses and deficit financing, the stability of the Lebanese Pound (LBP), the impact of being on the FATF and EU grey lists, fragile economic growth drivers, and pressures from population dynamics.

Social Tensions

Joelle Assaf, Conflict Analyst (UNDP)

- Intra-Lebanese relations remain highly volatile despite ceasefires, marked by political divides, increased vulnerabilities, and incidents of insecurity.
- Inter-communal tensions are fueled by competition over resources, access to services, and prolonged displacement of IDPs.
- The escalation of hostilities since October 2023 worsened intra-Lebanese relations, with tensions particularly affecting border areas and collective shelters.
- Disparities in aid, resource competition, and security concerns have exacerbated divisions.
- Tensions between Lebanese and Syrian communities stem from competition over jobs, services, and aid, with concerns rising over crime and overcrowding.
- Strains are anticipated to grow due to insecurity and strained infrastructure.
- Insecurity has reached its highest levels since 2017, with 84% worried about crime, particularly in hotspots like Beqaa, Mount Lebanon, and the South.
- To address these issues, recommendations include minimizing assessments, enhancing local coordination, linking to referral mechanisms, and following conflict sensitivity guidance.

Access to Services

Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)

- The four main pillars of access to services include: Affordability, Availability, Geographical Accessibility, and Acceptability.
- Supply challenges include high costs, overloaded infrastructure, and services not tailored to diverse needs and demand challenges stem from poverty, rising needs, and social stigmas.
- Challenges by Sector:
 - Education: High dropout risks, protection issues, and interrupted learning for displaced children.
 - Health: Administrative barriers, violence against healthcare workers, and limited access to services.
 - Nutrition: Worsening malnutrition due to funding gaps and poor hygiene in shelters.
 - WaSH: Strained water systems, security risks, and public health threats.
 - Shelter: Limited funding, structural damage, and eviction risks.
 - Municipal Services: Insufficient resources and pressure on local authorities due to IDPs.
- Cross-sectoral considerations include:
 - Foster collaboration between sectors like Education, Health, WaSH, Shelter, and Municipal Services.
 - Address protection risks, improve referral systems, and enhance service delivery for vulnerable populations.
 - Strengthen sectoral coordination to optimize responses in high-need areas.
- Solutions must tackle Affordability, Availability, Geographical Accessibility, and Acceptability to effectively address barriers to accessing services.
- Further details about the context, challenges, mitigation measures, and cross-sectoral considerations at sector level are available on slides 49 to 54 [here](#).

5. AoB

Raffi Kouzoujian, Assistant Information Management Officer (UNHCR)

Raffi Kouzoujian reminded partners that the Inter-Sector Co-Chairs (UNHCR, UNDP, OCHA, and RCO) are commencing a funding update, covering all funding received/committed in Lebanon from 1 January to 16 December 2024. Partners are kindly requested to submit or update their inputs on [ActivityInfo](#) by Monday 16 December 2024, COB. It is important that all partners report to ensure regular and transparent reporting on aid flows coming into Lebanon and to inform planning and mitigate associated risks by identifying funding gaps and trends related to international assistance and allocations.

6. Closing Remarks

Dr. Ola Boutros, LRP General Supervisor (MoSA)

Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)

Elena Ferrari, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)

Makiha Kimura, Head of Coordination (OCHA)

In their closing remarks, the LRP Co-Chairs thanked the attendees for their participation. The next LRP Partners Update meeting is scheduled for 10 January 2024.