UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Middle East Situation

Lebanon – Flash Update #8

20 – 26 April 2026

Core relief items arrive in Hermel as part of an inter-agency humanitarian convoy, supporting displaced families in hard-to-reach areas. ©UNHCR

Key figures

1,049,328
displaced people registered through Lebanon's government relief platform (MoSA 1 April)

115,432
internally displaced people hosted in collective shelters (DRM 24 April)

631
operational emergency collective shelters (DRM 24 April)

7,719
injuries since 2 March (MoPH 24 April)

2,491
fatalities since 2 March (MoPH 2 April)

268,898
Syrians who have crossed back to Syria between 2 March – 22 April (Syria GAPC)

52,907
Lebanese have crossed to Syria between 2 March – 22 April (Syria GAPC)

Overview

- **Ceasefire extended amid continued violations on the ground:** Following U.S.-facilitated talks in Washington, Israel and Lebanon agreed to extend the ceasefire for a further three weeks, with the stated aim of preventing escalation and creating space for continued diplomatic engagement. Despite the extension, military activity has continued, including Israeli airstrikes, demolitions, and drone activity in parts of South Lebanon and Nabatieh, alongside reported Hezbollah strikes described as responses to violations.
- **Displacement remains fluid as insecurity and access constraints persist:** The extended ceasefire has prompted limited exploratory movements, with insecurity near frontlines and within areas designated by Israel as restricted. This continues to constrain safe return, contributing to ongoing internal displacement and sustained pressure on collective shelters and host community infrastructure, particularly in the capital Beirut, which is hosting a growing share of displaced populations.
- **Social and inter-communal tensions are increasing in several areas,** driven by prolonged displacement, shelter overcrowding, economic pressure, and enforcement measures. Reports indicate the emergence of restrictive local practices, growing stigma toward displaced populations, and heightened fear among vulnerable groups, limiting access to services and increasing risks.

UNHCR response

The renewed escalation and displacement have driven widespread fear, anxiety, and psychological distress, particularly among communities already exhausted by years of instability and repeated displacement. While the ceasefire has instilled hope in an eventual end to the conflict and prospects for return, humanitarian needs remain acute. UNHCR and its partners are delivering lifesaving protection services, shelter assistance, core relief items (CRIs), and cash support to displaced Lebanese and refugees. Alongside the emergency response to internal displacement, UNHCR continues to implement its essential protection interventions, including community-based protection, shelter, multi-purpose cash assistance, and durable solutions programmes for refugees.

Spotlight: Cash assistance for urgent protection risks

Since the activation of **Emergency Protection Cash Assistance (EPCA)** on **6 March**, UNHCR protection partners have reached **7,524 people** through EPCA grants, enabling rapid access to security at a moment of acute displacement. EPCA provides **time-critical, short-term cash assistance** to refugees facing immediate protection risks due to conflict, injury, eviction, loss of livelihoods, or sudden displacement. Assistance prioritises persons at heightened risk, including persons with disabilities, older persons, and households facing urgent protection concerns. While the amounts are modest, EPCA allows families to make urgent decisions, such as securing temporary accommodation, when no other options remain.

One of those assisted is **Uhud**, a Syrian refugee and single mother of three children (ages 8, 5, and 2). Her family had been living in **Bourj Barajneh camp**, an area placed under evacuation orders and repeatedly targeted. Following an airstrike in **March 2026**, she fled with her children in search of safety. With no income and no means to pay rent, the family initially sheltered with relatives in **Sabra camp**, but severely overcrowded conditions and limited resources soon made this untenable.

Uhud and her three children in their new home, supported by UNHCR's Emergency Protection Cash Assistance following displacement. ©UNHCR

Facing the prospect of homelessness on the streets of Beirut, or returning to a highly unsafe area, Uhud contacted the hotline of UNHCR partner **Makhzoumi Foundation**, where she was assessed and counselled on available services. Through EPCA, she received **USD 150**. The grant enabled her to rent a small space in Sabra, providing her children with a **safe and dignified place to stay** during a critical moment of displacement.

While USD 150 does not meet all needs, for families like Uhud's it can make the difference between exposure to serious protection risks and immediate safety. As displacement continues and needs outpace available resources, **EPCA remains a vital, life-saving tool** when options run out.

Coordination

Under the leadership of the Minister of Social Affairs and within the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) framework, UNHCR Lebanon co-leads the Inter-Sector Coordination Group with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), OCHA, and UNDP. UNHCR also co-leads the Protection Sector with MoSA and Oxfam; the Shelter/Core Relief Items Sector with MoSA and the Norwegian Refugee Council, and co-chairs the Cash Working Group (CWG) alongside MoSA and World Vision International. In situations of internal displacement, UNHCR plays a coordination and response role within the sectors the Agency co-leads with the Government and NGOs, while maintaining overall responsibility for the refugee response in line with its mandate.

Protection

Protection needs are intensifying amid large-scale, repeated displacement, with children and women comprising the majority of those displaced. Of the approximately one million people displaced, an estimated 390,000 are children, many experiencing cumulative psychological harm after repeated uprooting since 2024. Overcrowding, lack of privacy, and prolonged uncertainty in both collective shelters and informal settings are driving heightened risks of violence, exploitation, child labour, early marriage, and gender-based violence, while also exacerbating family tensions and psychosocial distress. Older persons and persons with disabilities remain among the most isolated groups, facing severe mobility constraints, non-accessible shelter options, and barriers in accessing essential services. Displaced families living outside collective shelters, particularly those without legal documentation, face heightened exposure to eviction, exploitation, and reduced access to assistance. In response, UNHCR and its nine protection partners—among the 72 partners reporting under the Protection Sector in Lebanon—reached **more than 19,500 individuals with**

targeted protection interventions, including child protection, GBV prevention and response, protection for persons with specific needs, and community-based protection activities delivered both in and outside collective shelters.

How UNHCR and Protection Sector partners are responding

130,000+
individuals reached by protection interventions, including general protection, child protection and GBV prevention and response

62,300+
individuals benefitting from information sessions, awareness sessions, and individual consultations on how to access services or other information

50,150+
Individuals receiving mental health psychosocial support, including community-based psychosocial support

- **UNHCR supported 9,913 individuals with group or individual psychosocial support, of which 3,718 individuals were at heightened risk.** Support is delivered through individual and group sessions facilitated by trained social workers, counsellors, and psychologists, as well as through community-based activities inside and outside collective sites, including at community development centres (CDCs), helping people cope with distress linked to displacement, uncertainty, and repeated exposure to stress. This includes youth-led initiatives, like the art-based session in Mreijeh CDC reaching displaced refugee children to support self-expression and emotional wellbeing. Sports for Protection activities delivered by trained community coaches in six collective shelters, have engaged around 200 internally displaced people (67% children) through structured play and recreation, with children describing the sessions as the "best part of the day".

A youth-led art-based psychosocial support session at Mreijeh Community Development Centre helps displaced refugee children express emotions and strengthen emotional wellbeing. ©UNHCR

- **UNHCR reached 8,952 people with protection information, awareness sessions, and individual consultations**, covering key topics, including child protection, GBV risk mitigation, available services, and safety guidance. Information is delivered through multiple channels, including community-based outreach and fixed service points, to ensure access for displaced families both inside and outside collective shelters. For example, in the Bekaa, UNHCR-supported counselling services resumed their regular operations five days per week through an information point, providing displaced families with guidance on available assistance, protection services, and displacement-related concerns.
- **UNHCR provided emergency case management support to 408 individuals, including 103 children, to address protection risks including for children and persons at risk of GBV.** This represents over 40% of all case management reported at sector level, reflecting UNHCR's targeted role in complex and high-risk cases. Case management is a structured, individualized process used for people facing acute or complex protection risks – such as family separation, violence, serious medical vulnerability, eviction, or exploitation – requiring more than one-off assistance. It involves in-depth risk assessment, development of tailored case plans, coordinated referrals to specialized services (including health, legal, shelter, and cash), and sustained follow-up to ensure that protection risks are effectively reduced.
- **Strengthening frontline protection capacity:** Since the start of the emergency, UNHCR, in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), has delivered a series of training to **860 frontline workers** on child protection, gender-based violence, and protection case management in emergencies. In addition, UNHCR trained **151 partner staff** on Emergency Protection Cash Assistance, strengthening partners' ability to identify individuals and households at heightened risks and deliver quality, timely protection responses during the emergency.

5,875 Syrian refugees supported

through counselling and a one-time cash grant of USD 100, aimed at reducing risks and mitigating harm during their return back to Syria under the current challenging circumstances.

UNHCR launched the **return due to force majeure (RFM)** procedure on 1 April to respond to humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees who perceive no viable alternative than to return to Syria.

Protection through timely digital outreach

UNHCR continued to use its WhatsApp Channel to deliver critical security and protection messaging, reaching nearly **74,000 subscribers** during the week. Four targeted messages were shared, including on protection from explosive remnants of war, risks of premature return, child-focused safety guidance, and coping with traumatic events during periods of uncertainty. The strongest engagement was seen on content addressing exposure to traumatic events, **generating 174 messages and 430 voice note responses**, underscoring the demand for psychosocially relevant information. Overall, 21% of message reach extended beyond subscribers through forwarding, with the majority of engagement originating from within Lebanon (82%) and from Syria (12%), demonstrating the channel's role in amplifying life-saving information to affected communities. ©UNHCR/Yahya Assad

Shelter and core-relief items

Shelter and core-relief item needs remain acute amid fluid and partial returns following the ceasefire. Initial movements from collective shelters after the ceasefire did not translate into sustained return, with many families returning to shelters after finding homes damaged, destroyed, or conditions too unsafe. Collective shelters have seen an estimated 19% reduction of displaced since pre-ceasefire, down from 26% in the days immediately following the ceasefire announcement, reflecting temporary or reversible movements rather than durable return. At the same time, continued arrivals and inquiries indicate that displacement pressures persist, particularly in urban centres where capacity remains strained. **Beirut alone hosts over 41% of all internally displaced people sheltering in collective sites nationwide**, despite accounting for less than a quarter of total shelters, underscoring the intensity of pressure on shelter infrastructure in the capital. The shelter response continues to face constraints linked to limited availability of core relief item (CRI) stocks, with requests for re-distribution to newly displaced households increasing in some locations. Given competing needs and stock limitations, new arrivals and urgent referrals are being prioritised with available items. The fragility of the ceasefire, widespread housing damage, ongoing security concerns, and restricted access to villages and basic services continue to limit prospects for safe and sustainable return, underscoring the need for continued shelter support and more sustainable displacement solutions.

How UNHCR and Shelter Sector partners are responding

204,800+
people assisted through the distribution of core relief items (44% support by UNHCR)

307
collective shelters with ongoing repair activities (18% supported by UNHCR)

162
collective shelters with repair works completed (7% supported by UNHCR)

- **Ensuring collective shelter functionality amid fluid movements:** While some displaced families have returned to their areas of origin following the ceasefire, others have relocated back to collective sites, including some households who were previously hosted by relatives and friends, and continue to rely on assistance. Following updated guidance issued on 20 April, repair activities resumed in operational collective shelters, with partners redirected to address priority gaps. For example, in the Bekaa, UNHCR supported the rehabilitation of an existing facility – covering internal repairs and upgrades including structural repairs, improvements to living spaces, and the construction of internal partitions to ensure privacy and separation – enabling the opening of an additional shelter with capacity for up to 30 displaced refugee families.
- **Sustaining CRI assistance at scale in high-density shelter environments:** With women and girls comprising nearly 52% of the sheltered population, CRI assistance remains critical to preserving safety, dignity and basic living standards in high-density shelter environments. Since the escalation, UNHCR has distributed over 215,000 essential items inside collective shelters nationwide, including **nearly 70,000 blankets, 70,000 mattresses, and 10,000 solar lamps**, alongside other essential items.
- **Targeted CRI delivery to displaced families with limited access:** Beyond collective shelters, UNHCR has delivered nearly 30,000 CRIs to displaced Lebanese and refugees living in temporary or informal settings. Support outside collective sites is guided by vulnerability assessments and referrals, ensuring that households in informal, rented or host arrangements are reached despite access and resource constraints. On 23 April, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency humanitarian convoy to assist internally displaced families in Hermel district, providing 500

mattresses, blankets, and sleeping mats, 300 sleeping bags, and 150 solar lamps and jerry cans to displaced households outside collective shelters. In parallel, UNICEF and WFP provided hygiene kits, clothes for children, and food parcels.

Creating safe spaces for families with specific needs

Severe overcrowding in Madame Baaini School in Beirut left newly displaced families sleeping in corners, stairwells and open courtyards with minimal privacy. Through shelter repairs and the installation of wooden partitions, UNHCR and partners are transforming these improvised spaces into enclosed family units, improving privacy, security, and living conditions. For many families, the partitions have replaced exposed sleeping areas with defined household space, allowing older people, children and caregivers to rest, recover, and regain a sense of routine in displacement.

Abir, a displaced mother of three, described the impact: ***"Before, we were living day by day in a corner with just a tent. Now, with the wooden partition, my daughters have privacy, and I can breathe again. My eldest is on chemotherapy, and having her own space means so much. I lost my husband, but today I feel I still have my dignity."***

Wooden partitions installed at a collective shelter in Beirut improve privacy and living conditions for displaced families. ©UNHCR

Cash assistance

Cash assistance remains a critical lifeline for displaced people amid ongoing displacement, partial returns, and rising costs. With most displaced households living outside collective shelters and relying on rental accommodation, host arrangements, or informal solutions, cash is often the only modality that allows families to secure shelter, cover rent and transport costs, access medicines and disability-related services, and meet basic needs with dignity. Markets continue to function in many affected areas, including major displacement-hosting locations, making cash the most flexible and effective form of assistance where households face diverse and rapidly changing needs. As displacement remains fluid and pressures persist both inside and outside collective shelters, demand for cash assistance continues to outpace available resources, underscoring the continued need for scaled, predictable, and harmonised cash support across population groups.

How UNHCR and Cash Sector partners are responding

490,883
people reached with Emergency MPCA through the Government-led SRSN

110,000
vulnerable refugees reached with emergency MPCA

12,000
Lebanese and non-Lebanese households reached through the National Disability Allowance Emergency Assistance programme

- **Emergency cash support continues through coordinated mechanisms.** Additional emergency multi-purpose cash assistance (EMPCA) payments are ongoing among cash sector partners and will continue in the coming weeks to help displaced households meet urgent needs as the situation remains fluid.
- **Government-led shock-responsive cash is scaling up for conflict-affected Lebanese.** A further **80,000 households** are targeted through the Government-led Shock-Responsive Safety Net (SRSN). Nearly **491,000 individuals (137,430 households)** have been assisted through the SRSN, representing **USD 15.6 million disbursed** to conflict-affected Lebanese.
- **Preparations are also underway to initiate comparable emergency payments for conflict-affected non-Lebanese populations, subject to available resources.** In March 2026, WFP and UNHCR delivered emergency MPCA to approximately **110,000 people (27,000 refugee households)** across affected districts. Given continued dire conditions, with ongoing displacement and unmet needs, emergency cash assistance will be extended through the April and May 2026 cycles, for refugee households identified in line with the targeting criteria agreed and verified through established mechanisms. Where possible, the most vulnerable will be transitioned into regular/recurrent MPCA programme.

UNHCR Emergency Appeal for Lebanon

USD 61 million

The inter-agency **Lebanon Flash Appeal** calls for **US$ 308.3 million** to provide lifesaving assistance and protection to one million affected people over three months, from March to May 2026. Within the framework of this appeal, **UNHCR requires US$ 61 million** to reach **600,000** displaced people with protection, shelter, core-relief items, and cash assistance. These programs are aimed to reinforce and complement the Government-led emergency response, and the funding for the appeal should enable humanitarian partners to rapidly scale up assistance across priority sectors over the three-month period. Confirmed funding and projections against the emergency appeal reach **approximately 40% of needs** to date.

As of end of March 2026, UNHCR in Lebanon was only **around 20% funded** – with overall needs totalling US$ 472.3 million. Flexible and timely contributions are essential to:

- Maintain live-saving protection services;
- Improve and scale-up collective shelters so they are safe, dignified, and accessible;
- Provide financial support to the most vulnerable displaced households, especially those outside shelters;
- Replenish essential supplies so that UNHCR can respond quickly to further waves of displacement.

UNHCR is grateful to donors who have already stepped up to support and welcomes additional flexible contributions that enable teams on the ground to adapt quickly as the situation evolves. Special thanks to France, the EU, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland for their swift support to UNHCR's emergency response.

UNHCR and partners presence

UNHCR maintains presence in Lebanon through its Country Office and three Field Offices (Beirut, Tripoli, and Zahle) with a workforce of more than 300 personnel. We deliver our programmes with 13 I/NGO partners (9 national, 4 international) and in close coordination and collaboration with the Government of Lebanon.

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our donors who contributed to this operation

Australia I Austria | Canada I China | Denmark I European Union I Finland | Germany I Iceland | Ireland | Italy I Monaco I Netherlands (Kingdom of the) I Norway | Republic of Korea I Sweden I Switzerland | Private donors

Contact
Juliette Stevenson | Senior External Relations Officer | stevenso@unhcr.org | Beirut, Lebanon
Vi Train | External Relations Officer | tran@unhcr.org | Beirut, Lebanon

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