



# Lebanon Update

## Situation in North Lebanon

January 21 - January 27 2012



**A Syrian refugee girl stands under the laundry hanging in the hall of a school, where she is staying with her parents and different other Syrian families in the Wadi Khaled region, on the Syrian-Lebanese border, North of Lebanon. © UNHCR – Dalia Khamissy - October 4, 2011.**

### Highlights of the week

#### Numbers:

The number of registered Syrians with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) is 6,290. Since last week there has been an increase of some 600 persons, mainly in the Wadi Khaled and Tripoli areas. This increase does not reflect new arrivals but instead the number of persons who have been in Wadi Khaled or Tripoli for some time and just this week registered with UNHCR-HRC.

#### Distribution:

The January distribution of food, hygiene kits, milk, winter clothes coupons, toys and fuel started on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and will continue through the end of next week. HRC and UNHCR visited homes to distribute these items to the displaced and the most vulnerable of the host families, with the help of a number of other partners, notably the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). In addition, Caritas Migrant Center distributed hygiene kits while UNICEF provided toys for children.

#### Protection:

Both the local and displaced communities are concerned about their security situation.

A number of security incidents were reported this week which added to feelings of uncertainty. These included:

- the arrival of more wounded Syrians;
- bullets reported to have been shot towards Mchayfeh area in Wadi Khaled;
- the arrest of 3 Lebanese fisherman on the Syrian maritime border – one who reportedly had been fatally shot and the other two subsequently released to the Lebanese authorities;
- injuries sustained by a Lebanese child near an unofficial border crossing near the village of Kneisse; and
- several arrests for arms smuggling.

Registration certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC are still on hold. Moreover, no circulation permits have been issued yet.

**Health:**

UNHCR, along with its implementing partners DRC, International Medical Corps (IMC), Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF), the Ministry of Social Affairs and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have established a new mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) coordination working group. This MHPSS working group will meet on a regular basis to ensure there is no duplication in the mental health services provided. In addition, the group provides support and training to the outreach workers dealing directly with the displaced community.

**Education:**

UNHCR's implementing partner Save the Children Sweden (SCS) reported that 334 students are attending remedial classes on a weekly basis. Awareness sessions about the importance of education are also ongoing as there are still many school-aged children who have not enrolled in school. This is a pressing concern.

**Quick Impact Projects:**

In preparation for the inauguration of the Cine Club that was established in Wadi Khaled, UNHCR and DRC trained 11 volunteers from the local association Success and Happiness, on how to manage a Cine Club and how to select and discuss movies.

UNHCR and partners have successfully provided recreational equipment (toys, educational games and theater accessories) to ten child-friendly places in Wadi Khaled. Several recreational activities such as theater and games took place this week.

**Loss of Mohammed Mamlouk:**

The work on behalf of the displaced was dealt a blow this week by the sudden death of Mohammed Mamlouk, General Coordinator of International Donations of the High Relief Commission.

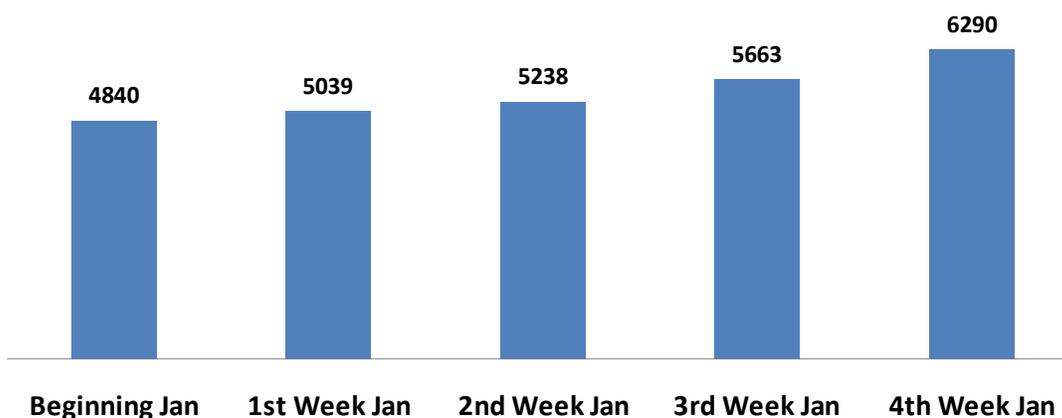
Mohammed had contributed enormously and tirelessly to the humanitarian response and UNHCR extends our deepest condolences to his family and to his fellow colleagues within the HRC.

**Situational Overview**

Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 6,000 Syrian refugees into northern Lebanon. Many subsequently returned to Syria, while others relocated inside Lebanon. Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC registered and assisted over 10,000 persons. Currently there are 6,290 persons (1,197 households) registered in the north and Akkar, residing mostly with host families in difficult circumstances.

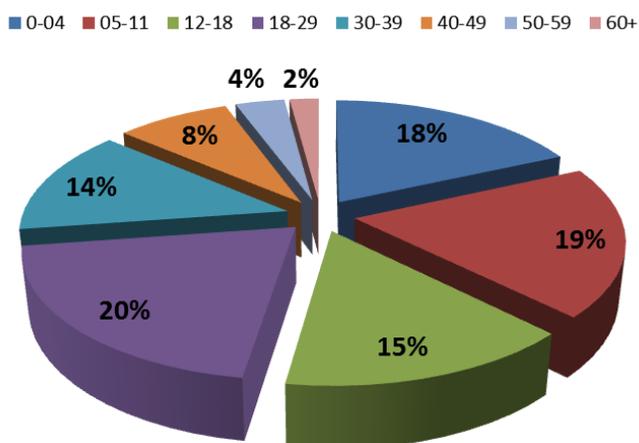
Those who remain are unwilling to return until stability and security is restored in their Syrian villages. Many individuals and families have been deeply affected by the events that caused them to flee and are reluctant return home until the situation stabilizes.

### Registered Displaced Syrians Trend in January 2012



Trends	1st Week	2nd Week Jan	3rd Week Jan	4th Week Jan
Newly Registered	193	141	405	607
Re-activated	6	58	20	25
Internally Moving	0	0	0	0
Returned to Syria	0	0	0	0
Absent during Distribution	0	0	0	0
Active Population	5039	5328	5663	6290

### Population Breakdown by Percentage



A number of displaced Syrians crossed into Lebanon earlier but just this week approached our Office. Local mayors and NGOs played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

Identification and registration occurs on a daily basis by outreach teams. UNHCR and the HRC verify the numbers during the monthly distribution of food/non-food items. Persons found no longer to be in the area are de-registered. Many of these are known to have returned to Syria.

### **Coordination**

A very solid coordinated response and positive working relations with the government's HRC and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) were established at the outset to the benefit of the refugees and hosting communities. These partnerships continue and together with other UN and NGO partners, the needs of refugees and affected communities are being holistically addressed. They include the following:

- Protection interventions to ensure safety, physical integrity and non-refoulement;
- Assistance to meet basic needs;
- Education and remedial classes;
- Provision of medical and psycho-social care.

A common database is in use by the HRC and UNHCR, and referral mechanisms were established to enable the displaced persons to access assistance through specialized partners.

### **Protection**

The vast majority of Syrians who have arrived in the past few weeks have come from Tal Kalakh and Homs. They express fear and anxiety about returning and most do not feel that the situation is safe enough for them to do so yet.

Most of those who have recently arrived have crossed at official border crossings expressing fear of going through the unofficial ones. Residents in the north report that the heavy presence of the Syrian army in border areas, as well as the presence of land mines on the Syrian side, prevent more people from fleeing to Lebanon.

UNHCR maintains regular contact with the Lebanese authorities and civil society representatives to follow-up on the security situation of the displaced population in the north of Lebanon. UNHCR has provided guidance to the government on the appropriate treatment of army deserters. A planned training of LAF and ISF remains pending until the authorities confirm a date.

UNHCR continues to follow-up on the cases of Syrians who are detained for illegal entry or stay –of which there are relatively few, underscoring the positive humanitarian approach maintained by the authorities

According to UNHCR's estimates, over 155 wounded have been treated in various hospitals in Lebanon since the beginning of the influx. Expenses related to their treatment are covered by the Lebanese authorities through the HRC. Their treatment and needs are followed-up by UNHCR and partners.

Registration certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC are still on hold.

The certificates are a means to show that the person is someone who is registered with UNHCR and the HRC and is aimed to prevent fraud and facilitate access to needed services.

Circulation permits have also not been issued by the authorities. Displaced Syrians are increasingly worried about their inability to move freely.

**Community Services**

Outreach workers from the MoSA and DRC continue to visit the displaced Syrians at homes and in schools in Wadi Khaled, Tall Bire, and Tripoli in order to counsel them, assess their needs, and refer newcomers to UNHCR and HRC for registration.

**Quick Impact Projects**

UNHCR's implementing partner, DRC, has completed the rehabilitation of two public gardens: the first is located in the Social Development Center (SDC) of Amayer and the second next to Moukaybel municipality. In addition, DRC finalized the renovation work and equipment for the public library in Aidamoon village, and the cine-club in Wadi Khaled.

UNHCR and partners have established ten child-friendly places in Wadi Khaled. These spaces are meant to be safe spaces where children can engage in games and activities such as theater.

**Shelter**

Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. Just over 200 persons are accommodated in three (abandoned) schools: Al-Rama, Al-Ibra and Al-Mouanseh schools. The schools were initially not well equipped (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) to receive large numbers of people but have been improved and are regularly monitored. The hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque has also been rehabilitated to host displaced families should there be a need in the future.

UNHCR and the Government of Lebanon initiated the renovation of Al Rama, Al Mouanseh, and Kashlak schools, and the hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque, while the renovation of the Al Ibra school was undertaken by the Al-Bashaer Islamic Association.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) together with partner organizations and outreach workers have identified host family residences in pressing need of improvement in preparation for the winter. NRC has begun to provide these families with coupons enabling them to renovate their homes.

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**Distribution (Food/ NFI)**

UNHCR along with the Government of Lebanon, DRC, Caritas Migrant Centre, World Vision, and UNICEF distribute food and non-food items to the displaced on a monthly basis. UNHCR continues to provide food and non-food items to newly registered families who were not on the UNHCR-HRC database during the last distribution.

Items Distributed	January 26th, 2012	Cumulative
Mattresses	0	4.589
Blankets	0	4.857
Food kits	749	5557
Diapers	0	886
Baby milk	154	1222
Baby kits	0	424
Hygiene kits	671	3,960
Women's underwear	0	714
Tuition fees	465	465
Books	465	465
Stationary	75	596
Uniforms	465	465
Family kit (kitchen utensils)	0	48
Clothes coupons of 75,000 LBP	0	1113
Fuel coupons (20 liters)	218	218

## Education

The Minister of Education is facilitating the enrollment of displaced children in public schools. UNHCR is covering the cost of school fees, books, uniforms, notebooks, and stationary. UNHCR and its implementing partner, Save the Children Sweden (SCS), are providing remedial classes for the displaced Syrian children given the differences between the Lebanese and Syrian school curricula. A total of 465 displaced children have enrolled into public schools. UNHCR is seeking to improve the school enrolment rate in 2012 by continuing to give awareness sessions to displaced parents on the importance of education, and offering remedial classes to both Lebanese and displaced Syrian children in Wadi Khaled, Tall Bire, and Tripoli.

## Health

UNHCR, HRC and UNHCR's implementing partner International Medical Corps (IMC) have established a referral system so that registered displaced Syrians have access to health care services through the most specialized partner. Public Health Centres, Social Development Centres of the MoSA, and a few NGO-run health care centres in the region are providing primary health care and medication to the displaced. UNHCR covers the cost of doctor consultations for women and children and up to 85 % of diagnostic tests for all displaced persons. The HRC covers the cost of secondary and tertiary health care through local hospitals in the north. UNHCR provides additional support where needed.

The HRC and IMC reached agreements with five hospitals for discounted rates in the provision of necessary health care. Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) started the implementation of a mental health project jointly with the Makassed Public Health Centre (PHC). A psychologist and a psychiatrist have been deployed in Makassed's centre to provide mental health counselling to all Wadi Khaled residents, including the displaced.

To date, there have been 324 hospital admissions since September 19 mostly covered by HRC, while 660 patients have received primary health care in different health centres and mobile medical units.

UNHCR conducted a specialized health mission to the north to review current services and needs. Initial observations note that there remains a gap in the provision of chronic medications. In addition, the use of a health information system and a health referral mechanism are needed at the field level. The World Health Organization together with UNHCR is liaising with MoPH, IMC, MSF and other partners to address these different gaps. An action plan is forthcoming.

**Capacity building**

UNCHR has invested in strengthening the capacities of governments and local partners through:

- Regular coordination meetings and joint plans of action;
- Technical and material support to the HRC in regard to registration, data collection and verification;
- Training and guidance to HRC, MoSA, partners, medical, educational and social service providers in a wide range of areas including:
  - protection of refugees and internally displaced persons;
  - effective registration and monitoring practices;
  - psychological first aid and mental health;
  - remedial class management and positive discipline;
  - computer skills for local health service providers
- Quick impact projects such as public gardens, public library and a cine club;
- Establishment of medical referral mechanisms and training for the systematic entry of data in the health referral system.