

UN INTER-AGENCY UPDATE

UNHCR, AUGUST 10-17, 2012

Highlights of the week:

- UNHCR registered 834 Syrians through the first centralized registration exercise in Tripoli, and with the cooperation of MoSA.
- Distribution of food vouchers began in the North targeting villages in Wadi Khaled and Akkar. Assessments are ongoing to identify suitable grocery shops in Tripoli to instill the food voucher system there.
- UNHCR and partner agencies are actively searching for alternative shelter options to relocate families currently residing in operational schools. Shelter remains a pressing priority both in the Bekaa and the North.
- MSF is coordinating with education actors in the Bekaa to vaccinate children attending remedial classes. WHO is also launching health awareness campaigns on the importance of vaccinations.
- 'Back to School' initiatives are encouraging Syrian children to enrol in school for the upcoming academic year. Youth are motivated and have expressed excitement over learning a second language in preparation for the Lebanese curriculum.

Numbers

There are currently 37,240 displaced Syrians registered in Lebanon. They are receiving protection and assistance through the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and UN and NGO partners. An additional 9,432 people have been in contact with UNHCR to be registered.

Protection and Security

Following the reported death of four Lebanese pilgrims detained in Syria by the Free Syrian Army, there has been retaliation in Lebanon with the random abduction of Syrian nationals, including in Beirut's southern suburbs. Roads were blocked in Majdal Aanjar (Bekaa) towards the Masnaa border crossing with Syria and to the Beirut airport.

Missions to the Bekaa were put on hold for security reasons. The scheduled visit by USG/ERC Valerie Amos, on her way from Damascus to Beirut, of a school/collective shelter in the Bekaa had to be cancelled.

In the North, the security situation was relatively calm in comparison to previous weeks. Shelling in the Dabbabieh village was of concern however relief activities could continue uninterrupted. The Lebanese Armed Forces intensified their deployment along the border following a dispute between residents in Akroum and Beit Jaafar.

This week, three wounded Syrians were admitted to hospitals.



North Lebanon

Protection

Many displaced Syrians continue to settle in Lebanese border villages in the North. Some of these villages, such as Al Nurah, Dabbabiyeh and Amaret el Baykat are subjected to regular shelling from Syrian territory and have reached their maximum hosting capacity. It is a pressing protection issue that these villages are no longer capable of hosting new arrivals.

To address the protection concerns involved with lack of suitable shelter, UNHCR conducted assessments in four collective shelters in the North, looking for ways to improve community mobilization and increase access to assistance. A multi-sectoral action plan, in coordination with partners, will be drafted following these assessments.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is trying to identify the specific health and safety needs of displaced Syrian women and girls so as to properly implement a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) program in Lebanon.

UNHCR and DRC outreach workers continue to follow-up on individual cases with specific needs in Akkar and Tripoli. Cases requiring further assistance are referred to partners and NGOs for help.

Registration/Numbers

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), began centralized registration for the first time in Tripoli at the Rachid Karame International Exhibition Center. The center has nine registration rooms, two protection rooms, two counseling rooms and a child friendly space.

Displaced Syrians travelled from various areas in the North to Tripoli in order to

register with UNHCR. The majority of these individuals come from Homs, Aleppo and Damascus. A total of 834 people (190 families) were registered in Tripoli this week.

During registration, people identified with specific protection needs, such as victims of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGVB), are referred to the appropriate specialized partners for further assistance. MoSA outreach teams also provide counseling to families with children that are currently out of school and refer Lebanese returnees to the services and activities available to them at the Social Development Centers (SDCs).

The total number of displaced Syrians registered in north Lebanon is now 20,364 (4,376 families).

Distribution

A total of 3,325 individuals (665 families) were assisted in Tripoli this week with food, hygiene and baby kits. Sanitary napkins were also provided by UNFPA.

WFP food vouchers were distributed for the first time in the North, covering villages in Akkar and Wadi Khaled. These vouchers will enable registered displaced Syrians to buy food items of their choice from pre-approved, selected grocery shops. Assessments are currently ongoing in Tripoli to identify suitable shops so the WFP food voucher system can be implemented there as well.

Education

One of UNHCR and partners' education priorities is increasing the enrolment rate of displaced Syrian children.

Save the Children International (SCI) met with representatives from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

(MoEHE) to plan for the new academic year and to discuss how best to increase enrolment rates.

With the cooperation of the MoEHE, SCI conducted assessments in a number of schools in the North to check their capacity for enrolment. Assessments identified the amount of available space, staff and equipment as well as any additional needs of the schools. These issues will be addressed in order to enhance the learning environment for both displaced and host Lebanese children.

MoSA has agreed to provide counseling to families on the importance of school enrolment. MoSA outreach workers will conduct home visits to registered families with children out of school to identify their reasons for not attending school. This will help in finding solutions for the poor enrollment rates.

Health

UNHCR and International Medical Corps (IMC) continue to look for alternative ways to cover the cost of secondary health care for displaced Syrians in Lebanon. Urgent medical cases are currently being referred to the Qatari Red Crescent (QRC), the Islamic Coalition of NGOs and the Arab Medical Doctors who are assisting in hospitalization costs. IMC referred 23 critical cases to the QRC this week.

Shelter/Water and Sanitation (WASH)

UNHCR, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) are looking for sustainable solutions to address the shelter needs of the growing displaced community.

UNHCR discovered that 30 families are living in six operational schools in Wadi Khaled. This is of major concern for

UNHCR and partners as schools will re-open in September. To address this problem, UNHCR and DRC held an emergency meeting with partners to discuss a relocation strategy for the families.

NRC continues to provide assistance to host Lebanese families with minor rehabilitations of their homes and through the provision of shelter tool kits. To date, 165 families have received first payments to start rehabilitation work on their homes. An additional nine unfinished houses are undergoing renovations and 127 families have received shelter toolkits.

Shelter needs are also being addressed for displaced Syrians living in four abandoned schools in the North. This includes the provision of refrigerators, gas cookers, washing machines and water tanks.

Assistance in the Bekaa Valley

Protection

UNHCR continues to work with partners on elaborating the referral and response mechanisms in the Bekaa, ensuring that proper support is provided to people with specific needs. Available services for children at risk and survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based (SGBV) violence have been identified.

UNHCR and partners use assistance activities such as distribution and registration to monitor and identify the protection needs of the displaced community. DRC met with 58 of the newly arrived families to ensure that all people with specific needs were referred to the appropriate specialized partners.

Registration/Numbers

There are currently 15,942 Syrians (3,453 families) registered with UNHCR in the

Bekaa. Centralized registration is taking place in central Bekaa and will continue in this area through the end of August.

Distribution

UNHCR, DRC, WFP, UNFPA and World Vision (WVI) assisted 2,475 individuals (495 families) this week through distribution efforts in the Bekaa. Food kits and food vouchers were provided by WFP in Al Qaa, Al Ain, Al Fakeha and Aarsal. UNHCR, DRC and World Vision (WVI) distributed baby and hygiene kits as well as mattresses while UNFPA assisted Syrian women and girls with sanitary napkins. Distribution assistance was provided to both displaced Syrians and host families.

An additional 3,120 people (624 families) received food and hygiene kits, pillowcases, towels, blankets and bed sheets from Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC).

DRC is planning door-to-door distribution for next week that will target all families living in the remote villages of north Bekaa. Families will receive food kits and non-food items as these areas are unable to benefit from the food voucher system due to a lack of suitable grocery shops. The isolated location of these villages makes travel to centralized distribution sites hardly possible.

Education

Syrian and Lebanese youth in the Bekaa are engaging in a variety of educational activities this summer, aimed at preparing them for the upcoming academic year.

Save the Children International's (SCI) Summer Accelerated Learning Program continues to benefit 650 children in the area while SCI is also preparing a 'Back to School' campaign encouraging children

to enroll in school. Through the campaign, SCI will meet with families, conduct outreach activities and organize a traveling theater group that will creatively invite children to return to school through interactive performances.

Many Syrian children spend extensive time following the news events in Syria. SCI hopes to restore normalcy in their lives by bringing them back to school. Youth expressed motivation and excitement toward learning a second language, such as French and English, in preparation for the Lebanese curriculum.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has also initiated daily activities for children in Aarsal (North Bekaa) and Saadnayel (Central Bekaa) that are benefitting 85 Syrian and Lebanese youth. Children are participating in language and computer courses in addition to various recreational activities, such as handicrafts and playing sports. Furthermore, NRC has organized professional preparedness courses to teach older youth vocational skills such as sewing and computer maintenance.

Health

The health needs of displaced Syrians in the Bekaa region continue to be addressed by UNHCR and several specialized partner organizations.

IMC will begin expanding primary health care services in Hermel with the cooperation of two MoSA centers in areas close to the border. AMEL also has a mobile clinic consisting of a doctor, nurse and medications that is traveling around north Bekaa covering 20 villages.

A national awareness campaign raising the importance of vaccinations is in the works through the World Health

Organization (WHO) and MSF. WHO is aiming to target Syrian and Lebanese children up to age one with the provision of vaccinations through Primary Health Care centers. Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) is coordinating with education actors to vaccinate children attending remedial classes.

Furthermore, Handicap International (HI) is conducting mental health and psychosocial needs assessments in north Bekaa in addition to supporting and referring wounded cases in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Twenty such cases have been assisted so far.

Shelter/ Water and Sanitation (WASH)

Finding suitable shelter options continues to be a pressing priority for UNHCR and partners in the Bekaa.

DRC shelter teams finalized assessments on the Mdoukha and Al Makassed schools in Saouiri, both of which are already hosting Syrians. Assessments revealed that the Mdoukha school is ready for rehabilitation while the Al Makassed school will need additional funding before renovation efforts can begin.

An additional five unfinished and abandoned apartment buildings in Bar Elias, Al Masnaa and Anjar were identified with the potential of housing 160 people (32 families).

UNHCR and partners are designing a cash for shelter programme, to be started in the coming weeks. Considering the ongoing influx of Syrians displaced and the limited number of unused buildings/schools that can be rehabilitated to serve as collective shelters, cash for shelter is expected to

represent a substantial component of the joint shelter strategy.

Meanwhile, in an effort to relocate displaced families currently living in operational schools, DRC identified several locations where to install shelter boxes. Shelter boxes can be added to buildings to increase their capacity, with each box hosting an additional family. 15 shelters in Ain Aata, Akaba, Majdal Anjar and Bar Elias were identified.

For more information on Syrian displacement in Lebanon, please visit the Lebanon page on the webportal:

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. There you will find facts, figures, and 'who does what', as well as updates on food and non-food items distributed per area and by agency.