

LEBANON: Arsal Influx Inter-Agency Update

18 November 2013



Arsal

35,000
Resident
Population of Arsal

19,500
Registered Refugees
As of 15 October 2013

6,000
Persons arrived
in the last 3 days

60,500
Total population in
Arsal

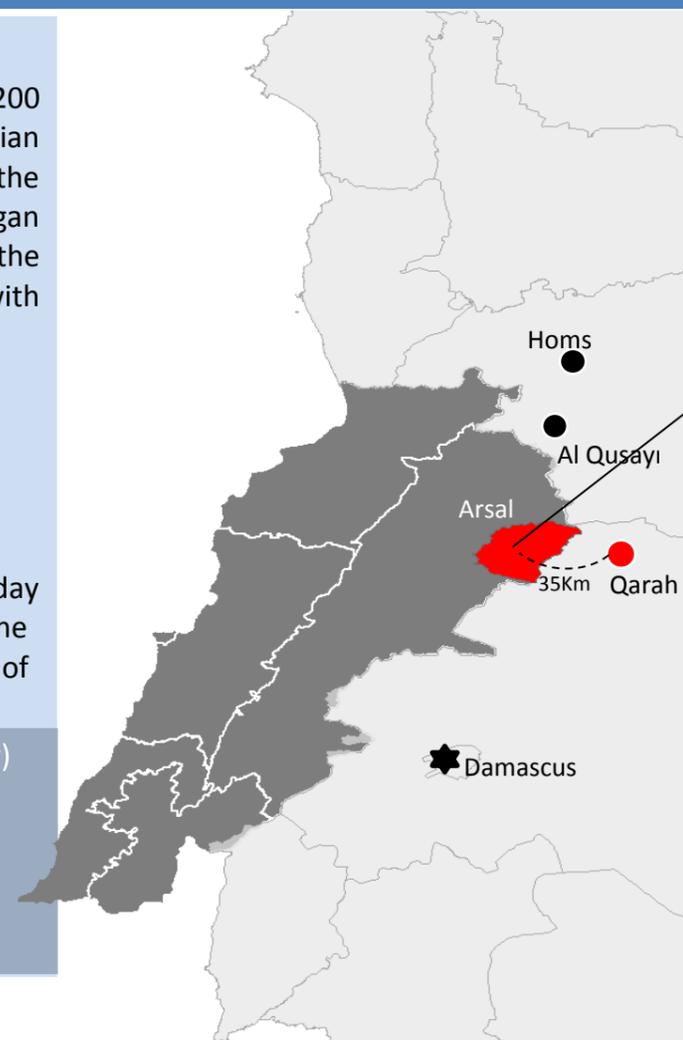
CONTEXT

Humanitarian partners are responding to an influx of 1,200 refugee families following heavy fighting between the Syrian Armed Forces and Armed Opposition Groups in the Qalamoun area of Rif Dimashq, Syria. Heavy clashes began on 15 November and are ongoing. Most civilians fleeing the fighting have come from Qarah, close to the border with Arsal, Lebanon.

Preliminary assessments indicate that some 80% of those fleeing are from Homs, and had been displaced to Qarah earlier this year. Some 300 families are thought to have passed through Arsal to reach safer locations in Syria.

Humanitarian partners have been on the ground since Friday to support municipal authorities. UNHCR is coordinating the inter-agency response under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Partners (Detailed activity breakdown to be shared shortly)
MoSA, Aarsal Municipality, ACF, Al Jamaa Al Islamiya, AMEL, BEYOND, DRC, GVC, ICRC, IRC, local NGOs, MDM, NRC, SCI, Dar Al Fatwa, HI, IMC, MSF, TDH, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP



Distribution of core relief items, 2013-11-17, © UNHCR

CORE RELIEF ITEMS

Reached 55%	Not yet reached 45%
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FOOD

55%	45%
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RESPONSE

Protection

700 Syrian families have been registered with local municipalities for emergency assistance. Registration will continue today, and local organizations are ensuring that those who are not yet registered receive basic assistance. All refugees are being referred for full registration interviews with UNHCR. There are no reports of new arrivals of Palestine Refugees from Syria.

Partners have set up a protection desk and are providing information to new arrivals. A small number of unaccompanied minors have been reunited with their families. Partners are working to identify other specific needs among those fleeing. A child friendly space is providing a safe area for children while parents seek assistance.

Public Health

Partners have deployed mobile medical units providing immediate health services and vaccinations to new arrivals. Pregnant women and war-wounded refugees are also receiving immediate assistance. Many refugee children are suffering from diarrhea and lice.

Shelter and WASH

Sheltering large numbers of new arrivals is a significant challenge. Dar al Fatwah has provided a temporary site that can accommodate 50 families and partners are installing emergency drainage and tents. 4 temporary collective shelters in public halls and mosques are also hosting refugees.

Upto 80 families are believed to have found shelter in informal settlements while others have made makeshift dwellings in unfinished buildings or are staying with local families. Access to clean water and sanitation is a concern in all sites. Partners are providing latrines and water tanks to alleviate the situation.

Core relief items and Food

Partners have started distributing core relief items to alleviate the immediate needs of refugees. 505 families have been assisted with food parcels, blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets and hygiene kits. The remainder will be assisted today. Women and children are being assisted with baby kits and dignity kits. Stocks are in place to respond to further new arrivals.

Challenges

The arrival of large numbers of anxious and traumatized refugees requires proactive measures to ensure calm and enable efficient humanitarian operations. Arsal already hosts some 19,500 refugees. Support to the local municipality and communities will be needed to ensure receptivity. Sustainable shelter options and access to water and sanitation are urgently needed.

Next Steps

Partners are making preparations for a larger influx following reports of escalation of violence in villages surrounding Qarah. Some 200,000 people live in the area of Qalamoun. Further spread of hostilities could result in significant displacement to the Bekaa.

Partners will scale up in all sectors of response. Should the Government secure acceptable land, humanitarian partners are ready to urgently establish a larger-scale temporary shelter site.

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