

LEBANON: Arsal Influx Inter-Agency Update

27 November 2013



Arsal

 **35,000**
Resident
Population of Arsal
+

 **20,025**
Registered Refugees
As of 26 November 2013
+

 **20,000**
Refugees registered with
the local municipality
since 15 November 2013
+

 **75,025**
Total population in
Arsal

CONTEXT

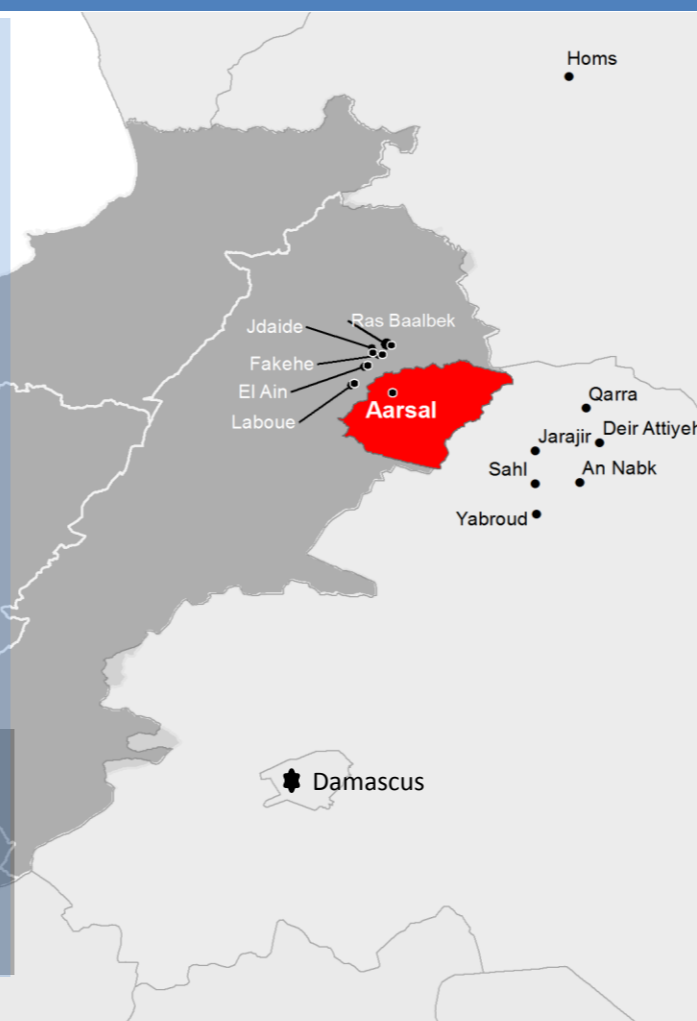
Humanitarian partners are responding to an influx of more than 3,400 refugee families following heavy fighting between the Syrian Armed Forces and Armed Opposition Groups in the Qalamoun area of Rif Dimashq, Syria. Heavy clashes which began on 15 November in Qarah, have now spread to many neighbouring villages.

The majority of refugees have found shelter in Arsal, with others now accommodated in the neighbouring villages of El Ain, Fakehe, Chaat and Ras Baalbek.

Humanitarian partners have been on the ground since the beginning of the influx. UNHCR is coordinating the inter-agency response under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Regular inter-agency coordination mechanisms in place for key sectors
- Referral system operational to assist vulnerable households with shelter options as they become available



Child accessing a water point in the temporary shelter site in Arsal 2013-11-27 © UNHCR

RESPONSE

Protection

(DRC, TdH, IRC, MOSA, NRC, TdH, UNHCR, UNICEF)

Refugees continue to arrive in Arsal at a rate of some 50 families a day. 3,478 families have been registered with local authorities since 16 November with up to 500 families estimated to be pending registration. Partners are exploring means of increasing outreach to ensure registration of vulnerable refugees.

Referral pathways for persons with specific needs, for follow up with SGBV, child protection and shelter support have been established to ensure the broadest possible access to available services.

Shelter and WASH

(ACF, Dar el Fatwa, Intersos, IOM, Municipality, MOSA, NRC, Save the Children, TdH, UNHCR, UNICEF)

The temporary shelter site has been expanded and is now hosting 67 families with adequate access to showers and latrines. A land plot for an additional site within Arsal is currently being assessed. A MoSA focal point was appointed to ensure the security and management of the shelter site in close collaboration with UNHCR and Dar el Fatwa.

WASH interventions during the past two days included provision of ten latrines, installation of 13 showers, supply of safe water to over 1,100 households, water testing and chlorination as well as hygiene promotion activities. The distribution of water filters is on-going with an additional 3,000 filters ready for distribution and another 3,000 in the pipeline.

Core Relief Items and Food Security

(Amel, Al Jamaa Al Islamiya, Arsal Municipality, DAF, DRC, GVC, IOM, IRC, Jousour Al Nour, KSA Relief, Prince of Qatar Aid, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP)

Distribution of core relief items is expected to resume tomorrow. Partners have now reached almost 2,700 families with food and basic items for cooking, personal hygiene, sleeping and keeping warm. New stocks of winter clothing, hygiene items and baby kits will reinforce capacity to maintain response levels. Winterization and hygiene assistance to refugees that resided in Arsal before the 16 November is ongoing, ensuring that emergency operations do not result in disruptions to essential winter support.

Public Health

(AMEL, Beyond, HI, ICRC, IMC, MDM, MOSA, MSF, MOPH, SHRO, UNHCR, UNICEF)

Partners continue to increase primary health capacity both through support to local health centres as well as by increasing the number of mobile medical units. Despite the particular attention paid to respiratory infections, the number of cases has increased in the past days. Partners also identified 62 cases of leishmaniasis (infectious disease transmitted by the bite of a sandfly). Vaccination against measles is on-going and the temporary shortage in chronic medications has been resolved. 73 wounded refugees have received medical assistance in the past seven days.

Challenges

While security constraints eased in the past days, continued security presence is vital given volatility on the ground. A joint UN security mission outlined preliminary recommendations for common action.

The eviction of 44 families from a local mosque and anecdotal reports from local actors signal growing host community concerns around the continuing influx of refugees. All evicted families have been provided with tents which will be pitched close to their previous shelter. MOSA and partners are working with local officials and communities to address broader concerns.

The poor living conditions of refugees are raising real risks of preventable diseases without upscaled WASH response. Water and sanitation challenges are likely to increase as winter weather conditions, including rain, set in. Partners are engaging further agencies to urgently expand the response.

Next steps

Sectoral coordination meetings have been established for protection, WASH and health as well as to engage local NGOs.

Information gathered through registration and multi-sectoral assessments undertaken this week will be shared among partners to better inform the response.

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