

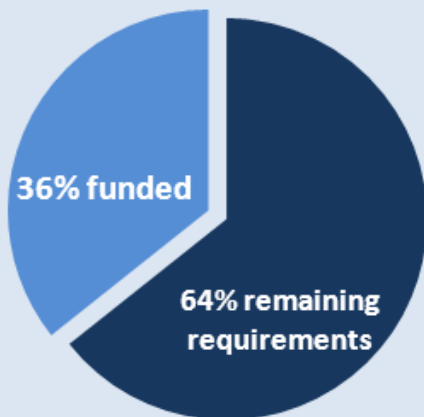
Key figures

1,087,814 individuals registered or pending registration

38% persons with specific needs

Funding

UNHCR total requirements: USD **468 m**



Syrian refugees await registration at the UNHCR registration site. @ UNHCR

May developments

Access to territory and timely registration

- The deportation of a group of Palestinians in early May and increasing restrictions on the arrival of Palestinians from Syria raised concerns about potential shifts in Lebanon's admission policies. Nevertheless, the borders remained open to Syrian refugees and the situation otherwise calm. Abboudiyeh border was temporarily closed on several days because of technical issues.
- 46,290 Syrian refugees were registered in May, an 8% increase from April. The average waiting time for registration increased to 29 days, primarily due to an increase in requests for registration appointments in the Bekaa.
- Over 53,400 refugees approached UNHCR for verification and renewal of their registration certificates. 25% of refugees surveyed during renewal were found to lack or have expired residency permits while an additional 13% had some family members with valid residency and others with expired residency.

Protection violations prevented, monitored and addressed

- Protection monitoring partners IRC, Mercy Corps, Intersos and Oxfam monitored 6,544 individuals in 198 different locations. Issues highlighted include increased tensions in view of the presidential election in Syria, confrontations linked to employment, WASH concerns in informal settlements, and a spike in the number of evictions and threats of evictions were also reported. Follow up is on-going.
- Protection monitoring teams also conducted several community engagement activities and information and awareness campaigns on the importance of registering with UNHCR, medical services at the nearby public health centers and birth registration procedures.



Access to legal services and civil status documentation enhanced

- 290 individuals arrested were referred to UNHCR and 67 detention visits were carried out by UNHCR and partners, reaching 442 individuals in total.
- 153 individuals were registered or counselled by UNHCR and 269 provided assistance in detention by AJEM (including 118 who received legal counselling).
- 1,057 persons were provided legal counselling by UNHCR and partners and 54 persons with legal representation before the courts on matters of personal status, including custody documents and marriage registration.
- 5,775 individuals received legal awareness session. The sessions focused mainly on marriage and birth registration.

Durable and humanitarian solutions made available

- In May, 407 refugees were submitted to third countries for resettlement or humanitarian admission and 526 departed, including 257 to Germany on the thirteenth HAP flight.
- A delegation from Finland interviewed 300 Syrians for resettlement. Results are expected in July. This year, cases of 1,784 Syrians have been submitted for resettlement, following the review of cases of approximately 15,000 individuals.

Achievements: January - May

Activity	 reached January- May	 2014 Target
Persons interviewed at the border	4,498	8,000
Persons registered (or pending registration)	247,800	600,000
Monitoring visits	12,921	50,000
Legal counseling	4,742	11,400
Detention visits	1412	3,000
Persons submitted for HAP and resettlement*	2,416	8,250
Departures (HAP and resettlement)*	2,870	5,900

*Includes Syrian and cases of other nationalities

Needs

Refugees fleeing violence in Syria often undertake perilous journeys through conflict-affected areas and are forced to resort to unofficial border crossings. Upon arrival in Lebanon, prompt registration and documentation remain priority needs to ensure access to services, relief assistance, identification of specific needs and protection interventions.

Refugees who entered through unofficial border crossings or who are unable to renew their residency are not recognized as legally present in Lebanon. The consequences of irregular legal status can be vast, not least relating to risks of arrest and detention, severe limitations on freedom of movement, limited access to livelihoods/employment, risks of exploitation, civil registration and problematic access to essential services, including birth registration.

Physical safety remains an issue of concern, particularly in communities affected at times by shelling or shootings from Syria. Refugees and members of the host community have been exposed to threats, physical mistreatment retaliatory actions, evictions, secondary displacements and other protection incidents. Lack of legal representation, awareness and irregular legal status complicate access to justice and remedies for these and other rights violations.

Challenges

Lack of legal or administrative refugee framework:

Lebanon is not a state party to the 1951 Convention or to its 1967 Protocol nor does it have specific legislation or administrative practices for refugees and asylum-seekers. As such, refugees lack safeguards beyond the domestic law applying to other foreigners.

Irregular legal status:

An average of 13% of registered refugees entering through unofficial border crossings and are not recognized as legally present in Lebanon. In addition, the vast majority of refugees are unable to pay the often cost prohibitive residency renewal fees at the expiry of 12 months. Without a policy change, the number of refugees in an irregular legal status may grow exponentially into the hundreds of thousands in 2014.

Dispersed refugee population:

Refugees live in over 1,700 different locations in Lebanon making protection monitoring and information dissemination critical to address protection incidents and ensure access to registration and essential services. Restrictions on freedom of movement due to security checkpoints, curfews, distance and lack of documentation also present serious challenges.

Lack of civil status documentation:

Many refugees lack civil status documentation. Worn out documentation can cause delays or rejections at the border, and sometimes, separation of family members. Lack of documents can create obstacles for refugees in accessing basic services like healthcare and education, and in obtaining other critical documentation, such as birth registration. The inability to register births may put refugees at a heightened risk of statelessness and increase vulnerability of individuals to exploitation and trafficking.

Physical safety and security and limited access to justice:

The overall security situation in locations such as the Bekaa and northern Akkar, conflict-prone neighborhoods in Tripoli, and tensions in villages throughout Lebanon, places the physical safety of refugees at risk of violence and physical safety. Solutions remain limited due to the lack of shelter or relocation alternatives as well as lack of access to justice, particularly for those considered irregularly present in Lebanon.

Strategy

UNHCR's protection strategy addresses key challenges and priority concerns of refugees including:

- Ensuring access to territory and reducing the risk of *refoulement*
- Ensuring timely registration and adequate reception conditions
- Preventing, monitoring and addressing protection violations
- Providing access to legal services and civil status documentation to ensure the rights of refugees are respected
- Ensuring durable and humanitarian solutions are made available.

UNHCR implementing partners

Association Justice and Misericorde (AJEM), Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CMLC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Relief and Development (IRD), International Rescue Committee (IRC), INTERSOS, Makhzoumi Foundation, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam, Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention For Local Development (SHEILD), Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA).