

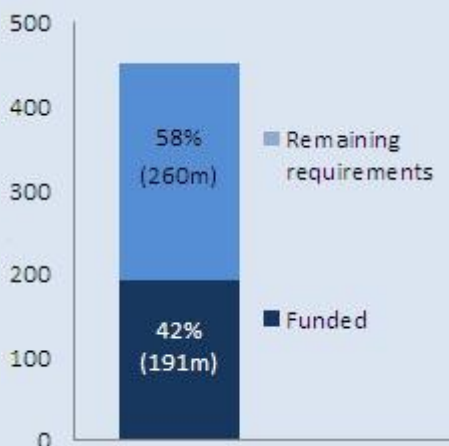
Key Figures

1,176,971 individuals registered or pending registration

39% persons with specific needs

Funding

UNHCR total requirements: USD **451 m**



August developments

Access to territory and timely registration

- On 21 August, the Government announced that all Syrians without legal residency status would be exempted from overstay fines until the end of 2014. This decision was immediately applied for those who wished to return to Syria and it was later clarified that this decision would also apply to those who decided to stay in Lebanon. UNHCR observed that most individuals who returned to Syria expecting to re-enter Lebanon received bans on re-entry to Lebanon for periods up to 6 months. In some instances, this resulted in family separation, which were taken up by UNCHR protection team with the authorities at the border.
- Although the border was not formally closed (as this would require the Cabinet's approval), Government officials have publicly indicated their intention to reduce the number of new arrivals due to the security situation faced by the country. As a result, the border authorities have significantly restricted admissions, first at the northern border crossings. On 9 August, a convoy of more than 1,000 refugees fled Arsal and returned to Syria after two unsuccessful attempts.
- 32,315 Syrian refugees were registered in August, a 29% decrease from July and the lowest monthly figure in 2014. The average waiting time for registration decreased by two days to 21 days. Over 36,000 refugees approached UNHCR for verification and renewal of their registration certificates. Of refugees surveyed, 37% of refugees lacked or had expired residency permits. Registration of Iraqis increased substantially with 733 registered in August compared to 429 in July.
- UNHCR began interviewing refugees who have been identified as undertaking multiple cross-border movements. The goal is to identify and inactivate those who are not in need of UNHCR registration.

Protection violations prevented, monitored and addressed

- IRC, Mercy Corps, DRC and Intersos visited 5,219 refugees in 211 locations and made 228 referrals to case management partners for persons with specific needs, shelter and WASH. UNHCR focused efforts on the impact of latest security developments which led to municipal restrictions, searches and raids of informal settlements and increased control of documents and residency at checkpoints.
- Threats of eviction increased with 470 persons reported to have been evicted. UNHCR and partners worked to respond through mediation with landlords, municipalities and other stakeholders and in some cases, provided financial assistance and relocation for vulnerable families.

Access to legal services and civil status documentation enhanced

- As a result of the heightened security situation, over 450 individuals were arrested for questioning. The majority were released within 48 hours.
- 190 arrested asylum seekers and refugees (93% Syrian nationals) were referred to UNHCR. 20% of the individuals were referred solely for reasons of illegal entry and stay. 53 detention visits were carried out by UNHCR and partners, reaching out to 261 individuals. 92 individuals received legal counseling and 143 received medical and psychosocial support. At the end of August, 442 asylum seekers and refugees were detained in various prisons in Lebanon.
- UNHCR and partners provided legal counseling to 1,265 persons on regularization of legal status, birth registration, and housing, land and property rights. 75 cases were provided with legal representation before the courts on matters of personal status, including custody documents and marriage registration. 3,192 individuals took part in legal awareness sessions mainly on marriage and birth registration, labor and housing, land and property related issues.



Syrian refugee children waiting for their parents at Tripoli registration centre @UNHCR

Durable solutions made available

- In August, 1,443 refugees were submitted to third countries for resettlement or humanitarian admission, the highest number since the beginning of the year. To reach this figure, 40,000 Syrians were initially pre-screened. 240 refugees departed to resettlement countries.
- Delegations from Uruguay and Denmark interviewed 160 and 140 refugees, respectively, to be considered for resettlement. Canada has increased its quota for Iraqis by more than 500 for 2014.



Achievements: January - August

Activity	reached January- August	2014 Target
Persons interviewed at the border	8,154	8,000
Persons registered (or pending registration)	367,659	600,000
Monitoring visits	22,467	50,000
Legal counseling	8,315	11,400
Detention visits	2,215	3,000
Persons submitted for HAP and resettlement*	5,591	8,400
Departures (HAP and resettlement)*	4,528	5,900

*Includes Syrian and other nationalities

Needs

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

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 domestic legal safeguards beyond those applying to foreigners.

Irregular legal status: An average of 13% of registered refugees have entered through unofficial border crossings and are not able to pay the prohibitive regularization fees. In addition, those who have entered through official crossings have difficulties meeting the residency renewal fees. UNHCR continues to advocate for the waiver of such fees.

Dispersed refugee population: Refugees live in over 1,750 different locations in Lebanon making protection monitoring and information dissemination challenging. Compounded upon this, restrictions on freedom of movement due to security checkpoints, curfews and lack of identification expose refugees to a myriad of vulnerabilities.

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 some villages, places the physical safety of refugees at risk of violence. 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, and
- 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).