

Minutes of Meeting Lebanon Response Plan Partners' Update Meeting

Meeting Location	Remotely Via Zoom	Meeting Date	9 August 2024
Chairperson(s)	Sophia Glazunova, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR) Yousra Taleb, Acting Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP) Jolly Shah, Head of Coordination (OCHA)	Meeting Time	10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared by	Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant (UNHCR)	Meeting Duration	2.00 hrs.
Participants	315 partners have participated from the Government of Lebanon (GoL), UN Agencies, and NGOs.		
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Remarks 2. Update on Escalation of Hostilities in South Lebanon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Gov-led Meeting on Humanitarian Preparedness Review • Health Presentation from Ministry of Public Health • Ongoing Response & Access Situation 3. Nationwide Preparedness and Sub-National Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparedness Exercise • Summary of Context from the Sub-National Level 4. Q&A by Partners 5. Closing Remarks 		

1. Opening Remarks

Sophia Glazunova, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR)
Yousra Taleb, Acting Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)
Jolly Shah, Deputy Head of Office (OCHA)

In their opening remarks, the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) Co-Chairs welcomed the participants and presented the agenda. They emphasized that, in light of the current situation, the focus of the discussion would be on emergency preparedness and the potential escalation of hostilities in south Lebanon.

2. Update on Escalation of Hostilities in South Lebanon

Feedback from Government-led Meeting on Humanitarian Preparedness Review

Cynthia Bakkalian, Project Analyst (UNDP - Disaster Risk Management Unit)

Cynthia Bakkalian relayed feedback from the government-led meeting on humanitarian preparedness review:

- The meeting was held to discuss preparedness and response measures undertaken in response to the escalation of hostilities in south Lebanon.
- Participants included members from the National Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Committee (covering public administrations and ministries), Governors of South Lebanon and Nabatieh, sector leads, representatives of UN agencies, donor agencies, and embassies, as well as members of the private sector.
- Key highlights from the meeting are captured in the presentation [here](#): slide 6 covers Shelter, slide 8 covers Health, slide 9 covers Food Security, and slide covers 10 Fuel.

- Moving forward, a list of critical sites and services will be created and shared with the Association of Petroleum Importing Companies. Additionally, a list of potential shelters across various regions (not limited to schools) will be prepared and finalized. To address sector-specific needs, three technical working groups will be established focusing on Shelter, Fuel, and Food Security. Moreover, information on the needs in south Lebanon will be shared with donor agencies to mobilize necessary funding.

Health Presentation from Ministry of Public Health

Hicham Fawaz, Chief of Hospitals & Dispensaries, PHEOC Logistics Officer (MoPH)

Hicham Fawaz discussed the health response to the escalation of hostilities in south Lebanon as coordinated by the Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC):

- The PHEOC coordinates information and resources to support incident management activities and establishes the framework for command, control, and coordination in responding to emergencies with health consequences and public health threats.
- The PHEOC has two main objectives for the current incident action plan: managing injuries and saving lives, as well as providing essential health services and support to the displaced.
- Addressing, handling, and providing care for casualties includes ensuring the preparedness of health care facilities, capacity building (emergency preparedness and response; medical case management; mental health; emergency disaster management drill), and coordinating among health care facilities. The number of hospitals covered and staff trained for incident response activities are highlighted on slides 17 & 18 [here](#).
- Trauma and emergency surgery kits have been received across two phases; details on quantities and distribution are available on slide 19 [here](#).
- The main tasks of PHEOC's Command and Control Center (CCC) include real-time data management, transfer coordination, decision support, communication, and collaboration, and communicating with hospitals.
- Lebanon's Primary Healthcare Network includes 298 Public Health Emergency Operation Centers, each providing 6 programs and 6 services (highlighted in slide 23 [here](#)), collectively serving over 1.5 million beneficiaries annually.
- The Primary Health Care (PHC) Department has developed a Preparedness and Response Plan to address any health crises arising from the armed conflict. The plan includes Primary Health Care Center (PHCC) crisis preparedness, management of the displaced, infrastructure back-up, and supplies backup (details on slide 24 [here](#)).
- Dashboards are almost all Ready, with timeline available on slide 36 [here](#).
- In the event of a war, PHCCs and hospitals expect to face significant challenges including ensuring the availability of human resources, overcoming shortages in emergency supplies and medications, managing fuel and oxygen shortages, maintaining access to care, implementing safety measures for healthcare workers, and securing financial coverage for the healthcare needs of displaced populations.
- In case of full-scale war, the Government of Lebanon will cover the hospitalization fees of the Lebanese population. International support is needed to cover for non-Lebanese.

Ongoing Response & Access Situation

Khouloud Mahdi Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA)

Khouloud Mahdi discussed pressing needs and reviewed capacities and gaps in the response:

- The estimated number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is around 98,000, as provided by the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and IOM. Currently, around 45 per cent of the estimated IDPs are enrolled in the intersectoral enrollment system.
- The enrollment system provides valuable information for sector coordinators to plan and target their activities more effectively.
- Challenges include:
 - Growing needs, especially among female-headed households and individuals with special needs.
 - Lack of privacy in shelters is increasing protection concerns and securing safe shelters remains a significant challenge, both for IDPs hosted by families and those in collective shelters.
 - Needs in collective shelters are continuous, and emerging services are additionally identified (maintenance in shelters, operational cost, etc.).
 - Competition over resources has caused tensions between IDPs and host communities in some areas.
- A review of sector capacities in the South, conducted after 10 months since October 2023, highlights that only 43,918 IDPs are registered in the enrollment system as of July 2024.
- There are significant gaps in the response that need to be addressed through collective efforts. Including expanding the enrollment system in border areas and other governorates, mobilizing additional funds for the most vulnerable, and updating the People in Need (PiN) and targets.
- Current priorities involve finalizing the review of capacity to be shared with partners and local authorities, updating response gaps, and developing preparedness plans for South and Nabatieh in anticipation of a full-scale war, along with a Business Continuity Plan.
- Additionally, there is a need to inform DRM/DRR about the targeted methodology for the Basic Assistance (BA) and Food Security and Agriculture (FSA) sectors, and provide updates on the PiN/Target/Funding requirements exercise being led at the national level.

Fadel Saleh Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA)

Fadel Saleh discussed the current access situation within and beyond the 12 km Frontline Area:

- Displacement statistics show that Israeli attacks have been concentrated within 10-12 km from the border, and that 98% of IDPs are from the four southernmost districts: Bint Jbeil, Marjaayoun, Sour, and Hasbaya.
- Currently, at least 142,704 individuals remain within 10 km of the Blue Line, many of whom need humanitarian assistance. While access is possible, it remains highly restricted.
- Within the 12 km zone, safety concerns have led to self-imposed restrictions by humanitarian partners and supply chain disruptions have created shortages and price surges. Additionally, there are limited comprehensive assessments due to operational challenges and reliance on local information.
- Beyond the 12 km zone, constraints include door-to-door visits and phone assessments affected by local authorities and active parties. Operational adjustments involve relying on trusted contacts and modifying strategies for resuming household visits.
- Due to the developing context where hostilities are increasing in specific areas of Lebanon where there is a high number of humanitarian organizations operating, the Lebanon Humanitarian Notification System (HNS) will be established in a phased manner, as follows:

- **Phase 1:** Focus in the short and immediate term on notifying static humanitarian sites across the entire governorates of South Lebanon, Nabatiyeh (outside SLR), Bekaa, and the Baalbek-Hermel region.
- **Phase 2:** The second phase would establish a mechanism to notify humanitarian movements into high-risk areas on a case-by-case basis (if the current tempo of the conflict persists).
- **Phase 3:** The final phase would then expand into the notification of static humanitarian sites in governorates at less risk due to the lack of conflict activity/airstrikes mainly over the past months which include Beirut, Mount Lebanon, the North, and Akkar.

3. Nationwide Preparedness and Sub-National Actions

Preparedness Exercise

Jolly Shah, Head of Coordination (OCHA)

Jolly Shah reminded the participants of the two agreed conflict scenarios by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) (slide 45 [here](#)) and provided an overview of the preparedness exercise:

Sub-National Preparedness Plan:

- The HCT asked the ISCG to support the development of a preparedness plan at the sub-national level for the uncontrolled conflict scenario, which could cause massive displacement, destruction of civilian infrastructure, and blockage of ports and airports.
- With upcoming meetings scheduled, these efforts are being combined with a review by sub-national ISCGs and key partners of business continuity planning in the event of a continued 'controlled conflict scenario' while the national-level HCT Contingency Plan developed earlier this year has already included the uncontrolled conflict scenario.

Contingency Preparedness:

- National sectors have shared topline priorities and prepositioning needs to respond to the 'uncontrolled conflict scenario' (250,000-1,000,000 displaced to all governorates) for the initial 2-4 weeks after massive displacement begins.
- The information includes: Activity/Item, Quantity, Duration, and Financial Requirement.

LRP Annex:

- The LRP Annex (overall PiN, sectoral PiN, sector targets, sector priorities, and funding requirements) needs to be updated with the current scenario (140,000 displaced + 149,162 remaining in 10km border).
- Revised figures being finalized now ahead of the next HCT meeting.

Summary of Context from the Sub-National Level

Ania Zolkiewska, Head of Suboffice & Regional Inter-Sector Co-Chair - Tyre (OCHA)

Ania Zolkiewska provided a summary of the context from the sub-national level on the potential humanitarian consequences in the event of further escalation:

- The escalation of hostilities has been increasing vulnerability, particularly for women and children, leading to significant displacement, strained resources, and heightened protection concerns.
- Essential services such as health, education, and water supply may be disrupted, exacerbating existing humanitarian needs.
- Priority actions for preparedness include re-positioning critical supplies (including food, non-food items, and medical supplies) in strategic locations to ensure a timely response,

strengthening coordination mechanisms at both national and sub-national levels to involve all relevant stakeholders (avoiding duplication of efforts), and enhancing the capacities of local responders and communities through targeted training and simulation exercises to improve readiness.

- Key considerations for communication should include:
 - Ensuring consistent and clear messaging to avoid confusion and misinformation among partners and affected populations and aligning all communication with the overall response strategy.
 - Emphasizing the protection of the most vulnerable groups, especially women, children, and the elderly, and addressing their specific needs in all response plans.
 - Advocating for increased resource allocation to address the anticipated surge in humanitarian needs, while focusing on early mobilization to prevent gaps in the response.
- Maintaining vigilance and proactive preparedness efforts is crucial, noting that a coordinated approach will be essential in mitigating the impact of any potential escalation.

Marguerite Nowak, Head of Suboffice & Regional Inter-Sector Co-Chair – Bekaa (UNHCR)

Marguerite Nowak provided insights on the potential humanitarian impact of intensified conflict in the Bekaa region:

- While recent airstrikes in Baalbeck and West Bekaa have not yet led to significant escalation, increased intensity of conflict could result in greater displacement and impact.
- In the event of heightened conflict, there may be increased movement of populations from Baalbeck to Central and West Bekaa, and potentially from northern Baalbeck to other regions. Unlike previous conflicts, significant movement towards Syria is less anticipated.
- Key concerns include access to essential services such as shelter, food, and health care.
- Sectors are updating contingency stocks and service maps, reviewing emergency response plans to address potential gaps in geographic coverage and service provision, and advocating for necessary resources.
- Contingency plans are being developed for service delivery in areas likely to experience displacement, and essential supplies are being prepositioned to meet anticipated needs.
- Effective communication challenges are maintained with disaster risk management partners to ensure effective coordination.

Jinane Chinder, Area Manager & Regional Inter-Sector Co-Chair - South (UNDP)

Jinane Chinder discussed the current humanitarian situation in the South:

- Insights from NRC consultations on trends observed during the 2006 war were shared and are being used to inform current response strategies and anticipate future needs.
- Areas within the South that could potentially accommodate an increased number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been identified. Options for hosting displaced persons in regions outside the South are also considered, should the situation escalate further.
- Gathering and consolidating data from various council stations in the South and Bekaa is crucial for creating a comprehensive overview of the humanitarian situation to ensure a well-rounded understanding of needs and resources.
- The aggregated data will contribute to the development of a comprehensive preparedness plan, to be presented in the next meeting.

4. Q&A by Partners

During the Q&A session, the following key points and questions were addressed:

- Clarification was sought on the preparedness plans, specifically the costed contingency plan for Lebanon and its implementation. It was confirmed that a costed contingency plan is in place, designed for scenarios involving 250,000 and 1 million affected individuals. The plan includes measures for both immediate and longer-term needs.
- In response to queries regarding the status of consultations and updates on the humanitarian response, information was provided on current and upcoming consultations, as well as how inputs are being consolidated to update the business continuity plan in response to recent developments.
- Questions were also raised regarding immediate actions and procurement needs. In response, it was emphasized that having necessary resources and procurement plans in place is crucial to ensure readiness for potential escalation.
- Sector plans, PiN, target adjustments, and funding requirements are being reviewed and updated in response to current security conditions and the evolving context and updates will be shared with partners following the HCT review.

5. Closing Remarks

[Sophia Glazunova, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator \(UNHCR\)](#)

[Yousra Taleb, Acting Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator \(UNDP\)](#)

[Jolly Shah, Head of Coordination \(OCHA\)](#)

In their closing remarks, the LRP Co-Chairs thanked the attendees for their participation. The next LRP Partners Update meeting is scheduled for 13 September 2024.