



LEBANON EMERGENCY

FLASH UPDATE

26 December 2024

Residents return to rubble of war-torn Tyre after ceasefire. © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

165,428

Internally displaced people in Lebanon
(source: IOM/DTM)

828,978

Internally displaced people have begun returning to their communities.
(source: IOM/DTM)

10,000

Refugee departures

90,000

Lebanese and refugee arrivals from Syria

Situation overview

- Since the cessation of hostilities was announced on 27 November, 828,978 displaced people—largely Lebanese—have returned to areas of origin (IOM), while Syrians who had been displaced internally face additional challenges returning to post-conflict areas given availability and price of accommodation and administrative restrictions on their stay at municipal and country level.
- Violations of the ceasefire agreement have continued to be reported, with insecurity persisting particularly in the south, where over 70 localities create additional challenges for displaced populations trying to return. Amid the destruction, family separation, pendular movements, secondary displacement, and the need for shelter options in areas of return are expected.
- In Syria, since the collapse of the Assad government on 8 December, the security and humanitarian situation continues to be volatile and dynamic, with global interest on how the situation will evolve in the short and medium term. Refugee communities in Lebanon, across the Middle East and beyond continue to show excitement but hesitancy to take a decision on return, citing insecurity, damaged/destroyed property, and lack of livelihood in Syria, as well as lack of financial means and current enrolment of children in schools in Lebanon. They continue to express an interest in temporary visits to observe the situation. Population movements through the three open official border crossings of Masnaa, Qaa and Arida in Lebanon, as well as reportedly by irregular means, continues at a low pace from Lebanon to Syria of at least 10,000 people, with numbers likely to increase given daily movements.
- While the situation continues to remain highly fluid in Lebanon and Syria, influx from Syria into Lebanon has also been observed of an estimated 90,000 Lebanese and Syrians, according to local authorities, into the Hermel area of Hermel-Baalbek Governorate since 8 December.



UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR continues to respond to the needs of refugees and Lebanese displaced across Lebanon, returnees within Lebanon and new arrivals from Syria, by providing protection services, emergency cash assistance, core relief items, access to safe shelter, health care, and psychosocial support.

RESPONSE TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

- UNHCR is coordinating closely with the authorities and other humanitarian organizations, and providing protection services, emergency cash assistance, core relief items, access to safe shelter, health care, and psychosocial support for those who remain in displacement.
- An extensive Outreach Volunteer network remain active across Lebanon, ensuring that refugees' issues and concerns are captured. Concerns include fears of sectarianism and reprisals, as well as worries over limited infrastructure, services, and livelihoods.
- Trends are monitored and community questions are collected across all Accountability to Affected People (AAP) platforms. UNHCR provides a range of accessible and rapid channels of communication with affected people - including a HELP page and a WhatsApp Channel – which are used to inform affected people about procedures, structures, and processes, so that they can make informed decisions and choices.
- 19 Community Development Centres (of 31) are currently open to receive refugees, Lebanese IDPs, and host community. Of the 12 closed Centres, four are in unreachable areas and eight are damaged. Assessments are underway to determine damage and needed rehabilitation. CDCs recorded 6,551 instances of participation last week via in-person, online, or mobile psychosocial support (PSS), awareness raising, counselling, referral.
- Considering the rapid decrease in number of collective and the fluid context, current works in sites for collective shelters are being reviewed. UNHCR is monitoring the situation and will adapt to the changing context, including potential consolidation or decommissioning of collective shelters.

RESPONSE TO RETURNEES WITHIN LEBANON

- For families returning to their areas of origin, risks of mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), explosive remnants, structural damage, and winter exposure persist. There are also continuing and urgent needs for shelter to cope with damaged housing and infrastructure, support for essential services, especially for displaced families returning to their communities.
- With the winter season, there are needs to help families cover essential needs, including fuel to stay warm and warm clothes. UNHCR is providing blankets, winter jackets, weatherproofing for families living in informal tented settlements (ITSs), and insulation kits for those in tents above 900 meters.
- In South Lebanon, UNHCR and partners continue to address the needs of communities who have had their houses heavily damaged or destroyed by the violence. Additionally, core relief items including blankets, mattresses, pillows, and kitchen sets have been distributed to families in need.
- UNHCR and partner frontliners are equipped with counselling lines regarding returns and access to services following the Lebanon ceasefire. They cover key protection concerns related to physical safety, access to services, winter weather risks, sophisticated scams (risk of exploitation and kidnapping), cross border returns and social cohesion. The emergency HELP page includes contacts for legal aid on housing, land, and property issues for Lebanese citizens.
- UNHCR conducted a Ceasefire Return Situation Survey aimed at understanding the current location, intentions of internally displaced people and barriers to return to their pre-conflict places of residence in Lebanon. The survey provides that 82 per cent of Lebanese and 64 per cent of Syrians have returned to their original (pre-conflict) places of residence. A larger share of Lebanese respondents (40 per cent) reported that they returned to their original place of residence. As the main reason for remaining at the place of secondary displacement both groups referred to the damaged/ inaccessible housing (25 per cent Lebanese and 21 per cent Syrian respondents).
- Two Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities located in South Lebanon and supported by UNHCR have resumed their mental health activities.

RESPONSE FOR NEW ARRIVALS

- While return from Lebanon to Syria continues, the fall of the Syrian regime has also resulted in newly arriving Syrian families seeking refuge in Lebanon, while Lebanese families are also returning to Lebanon.
- Considering the rapidly changing dynamics and evolving context in the country, UNHCR continues to monitor the population movements, and engage with refugee and Lebanese returnees' communities to respond to mobilize the response to the most immediate humanitarian needs and track intentions, address questions and ensure dissemination of relevant information to the communities.



- UNHCR and partners are provided with *if-asked* counselling lines for Syrians in Lebanon in response to the rapidly evolving situation in Syria.
- UNHCR and other UN agencies aided those who had been stranded at the Masnaa border crossing in the first days of takeover of the caretaker authorities in Syria and remain on standby to quickly respond again as the situation dictates.
- The inter-sector coordination group at Bekaa level, co-chaired by UNHCR, UNDP and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), has met several times related to new arrivals to the Hermel area in Bekaa. Estimates are of 90,000 people in total (of which 20,000 are Lebanese returnees from the villages along the Syria/Lebanon border), including approximately 175 shelters identified in Hermel hosting an estimated 39,000 from the total. In terms of sector response ongoing, food, basic assistance in the form of blankets, mattresses and pillows, water trucking and hygiene kits, as well as primary health coverage are ongoing. The overall response is to ensure immediate lifesaving response for three months to emergency needs based on quick assessments.

KEY RESPONSE SINCE OCTOBER 2023



273 K

people benefited from the expansion of multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA)



258 K

people supported with core relief items (91 per cent of them being Lebanese)



124 K

people receiving shelter support, including Cash-for-Shelter, rehabilitation works, enhanced access to water



103 K

people are targeted to receive Cash-for-Shelter (91 per cent of them are Lebanese)



77 K

people supported with Emergency Protection Cash Assistance (EPCA) (66 per cent of the persons reached are Lebanese)



56 K

people follow the UNHCR Lebanon WhatsApp Channel. The HELP Lebanon website has received over 900,000 visits and 2,225,750 page views



570

Outreach Volunteer remain active across Lebanon, ensuring that refugees' issues and concerns are captured



242

war-wounded refugees supported for treatment by UNHCR in contracted hospitals



120

items donated or is in the process of procuring the following items to support local authorities (60 Trauma Kits; 40 Non-Communicable Disease Kit; 10 Ambulances; 10 Emergency Health Kit)



44

hospitals included in UNHCR contracted hospital network for secondary health care coverage for refugees.

Useful links

- Lebanon updates
- Regional Flash Update #6
- Regional Refugee Community Feedback about Developments in Syria



FUNDING | UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation
 Australia | Austria | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan |
 Luxembourg | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Norway | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Sweden | Switzerland | United
 Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America

With the support of the following organizations and private sector partners:
 Australia for UNHCR | España con ACNUR | Central Emergency Response Fund | Japan for UNHCR | Private donors in
 Italy | Private donors in Kuwait | Private donors in MENA | Private donors in the Netherlands | Private donors in the Republic
 of Korea | Private donors in the United States of America | Sweden for UNHCR | UK for UNHCR | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe

CONTACT | Juliette Stevenson | Senior External Relations Officer | stevenson@unhcr.org | Beirut, Lebanon
 Fabien Faivre | External Relations Officer | faivre@unhcr.org | Beirut, Lebanon