

## Meeting Notes

### Ad-Hoc Inter-Sector Coordination Group Meeting

Friday, 31 January 2025, 10:30 - 12:00  
UNHCR/Online via MS Teams

The Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) meeting was held to present on Planning and Preparedness for Influx from Syria to Lebanon (including objectives, updates, scenarios, and considerations, and to have a sectoral discussion on Contingency Planning and Preparedness. Sector coordinators were also reminded to conduct capacity assessment for new Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) 2025 appealing partners, and an update was provided on Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) by REACH.

#### Key Highlights:

#### Planning and Preparedness for Influx from Syria to Lebanon

##### – Objective and Background:

- In anticipation of a potential influx from Syria, the inter-sector needs to conduct a planning and preparedness exercise.
- The situation remains fluid and unpredictable, requiring proactive planning to mitigate risks.
- Sectors need to be ready to adapt to different scenarios and ensure a coordinated, efficient multisectoral response.

##### – New Arrivals Update:

- Following the events in Syria on 8 December, Lebanon began to witness cross-border arrivals particularly in the Hermel region of Baalbek Governorate.
- As of 27 January, the Baalbek DRM reported 87,225 individual arrivals from Syria including 35,115 individuals in 224 informal collective shelters with 52,110 in the community including 20,000 Lebanese returnees. No significant new arrivals as of recent.
- Cross-border movement is currently stable; however, outside collective shelters, the situation remains fluid with continuous movement.
- Response efforts across sectors are gradually increasing but gaps persist.
- A dedicated operational coordination meeting has been established for Hermel.
- The following assessments are being conducted:
  - Multi-sectorial Needs Assessment (MSNA) at site level.
  - Household profiling exercise by MoSA.
- Details on the “Response to New Arrivals in Baalbeck El Hermel and Bekaa” as of 27 January 2025 is available on slide 8 [here](#) and details on the “Remaining Gaps/Needs: new Arrivals in Baalbeck El Hermel and Bekaa” is available on slide 9.
- The principled approach to new arrivals includes:
  - Host state/government is the primary provider responsible for the protection of refugees/displaced persons under international law.
  - Host state/government has a legitimate right to know who is on its territory.
  - All states should respect the principle of non-refoulement, part of customary international law.
  - Humanitarian response should be available based on Age, Gender, Diversity (AGD) principles.

- To protect refugees/displaced persons, preserve access and safeguard integrity of the institution of asylum, civilian character of asylum is critical.
- **Scenarios:**
  - 200,000 arrivals: stabilization in Syria; current situation is part of the ongoing response under the LRP 2025.
  - 400,000 arrivals: fragmentation and/or partition to Autonomous Regions in Syria that could lead to influx to Lebanon. This would require additional contingency planning.
  - 700,000 arrivals: complete breakdown of law and order, large scale civil conflict in Syria that would lead to larger influx to Lebanon, necessitating a comprehensive emergency response.
- **Considerations:**
  - Phase 1 (first 3 months): Initial emergency response, in coordination with the host authorities and communities.
    - Close coordination with DRM and other relevant government identification mechanisms for new arrivals.
    - Rapid multisector assessment to identify needs of new arrivals.
    - Response to emergency/lifesaving and basic humanitarian assistance in places and communities where new arrivals are staying.
    - Locally negotiated relocations and/or support to individuals hosted by community.
  - Phase 2 (3 to 6 months since influx): Individual assessment.
    - Undertake initial interviews with families to establish needs, characteristics, and intentions.
    - Establish full profile of the group to advocate for protected status by the government.
    - Identify and refer persons with specific needs within the group.
    - Enhanced response in Spontaneous Settlements and potential for Cash support to urban caseload.
  - Phase 3 (6 months since influx): Individualized assistance/targeted approach based on need.
    - Further engagement with GoL on individual registration of refugees, including civilian character assessments.
    - Continued scale-up of assistance to respond to emerging needs.
  - Advocacy:
    - Access to territory: Protection-sensitive entry systems and principles of non-refoulement and right to seek asylum should be applied by Lebanese authorities at official and unofficial crossing points.
    - Equal access to emergency response and services: Response should ensure that all affected people regardless of nationality, legal status, age, gender, or other diversity have equal access to services and safety, including shelter, health and education.
    - Centrality of protection: Centrality of protection for community and individual response should be sustained/strengthened (including AGD considerations for inclusion of the most vulnerable, role of communities at the center of response, and AAP).
    - Multi-layered cross sectoral coordination: advocate for multi-sectoral approach where multiple ministries, agencies, partners, and other stakeholders are involved in emergency response.

- Preventive Health Services and Mental Health: Ensure that new arrivals have access similar to in country refugees to preventive health measures including vaccination, health education, and primary health care services. This is coupled with access to psychological first aid and mental health services.
- Civilian character: Civilian character of asylum should be upheld by all.

### Contingency Planning/Preparedness Discussion

Sectors provided feedback on the top risks anticipated with regards to the situation, actions they plan to take if the influx from Syria is above 200,000 individuals (but does not exceed 700,000 individuals).

- Key Risks and Challenges Identified:
  - Shelter capacity remains a major constraint. The expansion of informal settlements is restricted by government policies, leaving unfinished buildings, spontaneous settlements, and host communities as the primary sheltering options.
  - Water and sanitation facilities will be overwhelmed, increasing the risk of cholera and other disease outbreaks. Existing WASH services are already strained, with dependency on US funding posing an additional risk to service continuity.
  - Health systems will face severe pressure, particularly in rural and border areas, where existing medical infrastructure is limited. The need for increased vaccinations, mobile clinics, and disease surveillance was emphasized.
  - Food security and basic assistance services will be stretched, requiring pre-positioning of relief items and additional funding for cash and in-kind support.
  - Protection concerns will escalate, particularly for women, children, and vulnerable individuals. The lack of legal documentation may prevent access to services, while tensions between new arrivals and host communities could create social unrest.
- Immediate and Medium-Term Actions (0–6 months):
  - Rapid needs assessments to determine the exact scale of assistance required and identify priority intervention areas.
  - Pre-positioning of critical relief items, including core relief items (CRIs), hygiene kits, winterization kits, and medical supplies, to ensure immediate response capacity.
  - Emergency water trucking, sanitation infrastructure upgrades, and hygiene promotion in overcrowded shelters and informal settlements to prevent disease outbreaks.
  - Deploying mobile medical teams to high-risk areas and ensuring stockpiling of essential medications and vaccines to mitigate public health risks.
  - Advocating for access to services for new arrivals, including legal support for documentation, safe shelter options, and integration into existing aid frameworks.
  - Strengthening coordination with the Lebanese government, humanitarian agencies, and local authorities to align emergency responses with official policies.
  - Enhancing community engagement to reduce tensions between new arrivals and host communities while ensuring inclusive service provision.
  - Developing an inter-agency contingency fund to address funding gaps and ensure sustainability of response efforts.
- Inter-Sector Dependencies and Coordination Needs:
  - Shelter, WASH, and Health responses must be closely aligned to ensure minimum living standards in informal settlements and collective shelters. Overcrowding could exacerbate disease risks, requiring coordinated public health interventions.
  - Food security and cash assistance programs must adapt to government restrictions on cash transfers, with contingency plans for in-kind assistance where necessary.
  - Protection and community engagement efforts need to be strengthened to mitigate tensions, prevent GBV, and ensure safe environments for displaced individuals.
  - Information management and reporting mechanisms must be improved to accurately capture needs and gaps, ensuring real-time adjustments to response plans.

- Advocacy efforts must be unified to ensure that the humanitarian response remains principled, needs-based, and inclusive despite political and funding constraints.

#### AoB

#### – **Reminder for Sector Coordination Teams to Conduct Capacity Assessment for New LRP 2025 Appeal Partners:**

- 162 Appealing organizations, out of which 133 are existing LRP partners and 30 are new partners requiring capacity assessment.
- For **all partners**, please conduct an analysis of the appealed data submitted by each organization and identify any significant discrepancies based on your technical expertise within the sector. Should you detect any major inconsistencies, kindly reach out to the respective partner for clarification. If amendments are required, please refrain from altering any of the partner's inputs. Instead, contact Maroun Sader at [sader@unhcr.org](mailto:sader@unhcr.org) for support.
- For **new partners**, please follow the steps on slide 22 [here](#) to conduct the capacity assessment.
- For **rejected partners**, we highly appreciate if you could follow up with them by sending a rejection email (template shared via email). Please check with [lebbeia@unhcr.org](mailto:lebbeia@unhcr.org) before informing any partner if are rejected or accepted.

#### – **Update on Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM):**

- IMPACT/REACH, in coordination with the AAWG, will conduct a rapid needs assessment called Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) in Bekaa, Baalbeck and Dahyeh in February, to support the prioritization of the response.
- Considering the current context post cease-fire, the lack of needs assessment in these areas and the impact of the SWO on the delivery of life-saving assistance, it is important for the inter-sector to know that this assessment's results will be available in the coming weeks, to support an adequate prioritization of aid.

#### **Action Points:**

1. Sector Coordinators to conduct capacity assessment for new partners by Wednesday, 5 February 2025 COB.

For additional information, please refer to the meeting presentation [here](#).