



Middle East Situation Lebanon - Flash Update #1 2 – 8 March 2026

A displaced elderly woman speaks to UNHCR about her experiences being displaced at an emergency collective shelter in Saida. ©UNHCR



People Forced to Flee

517,000

Displaced people registered through Lebanon's government relief platform (source MOSA 8 March at 19:00)

117,228

Internally displaced people hosted in collective shelters (Source: DRM as of 8 March 2026 at 19:00)

538

Operational emergency Collective Shelters (Source: DRM as of 8 March 2026 at 19:00)

70,673

Syrians who have crossed back to Syria between 2-7 March (Source: Syria GAPC)

6,939

Lebanese have crossed to Syria between 2-7 March (Source: Syria GAPC)

Needs and UNHCR's Emergency Response

Lebanon is facing a rapidly evolving and volatile security situation, in the context of the wider regional situation. Since 2 March, **hundreds of thousands of families have been fleeing** southern Lebanon, the Bekaa, and Beirut's southern suburbs as Israeli evacuation orders were issued and airstrikes continue. **Families are still on the move seeking safety and shelter. Refugees are among those directly impacted by the attacks, evacuation orders and displacement, notably since Lebanon remains one of the countries hosting the largest refugee population per capita.**

On 8 March, the Minister of Public Health announced that 394 people have been killed and 1,160 injured in Lebanon since the start of the current escalation. The escalation is seeing a growing number of civilian casualties with children and women representing a significant proportion of the casualties.

Under the leadership of the Minister of Social Affairs, and within the existing Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) framework, UNHCR continues to co-lead the Inter-Sector Coordination Group with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), OCHA and UNDP, as well as the Protection and the Shelter sectors, and co-chairs the Cash Working Group. UNHCR's contribution - within coordination and operational delivery - is aimed to compliment and reinforce the Government-led emergency response and its dedicated efforts to speedily support the hundreds of thousands of civilians impacted by the hostilities - to alleviate their suffering and ensure people's protection, dignity and resilience. **UNHCR and partners have been on the ground across Lebanon since 2 March**, delivering life-saving protection and cash assistance to displaced refugees, and shelter and core-relief items to displaced Lebanese and refugees fleeing areas under attack and evacuation.

The hostilities are driving extreme fear, anxiety, and psychological distress, particularly among communities already worn down by years of instability and repeated displacement. **Protection must be at the centre of the response.**

Since the launch of the [Government's relief platform where people can self-register](#) the number of displaced persons who registered via the link reached approximately 517,000 people, including non-Lebanese. Within the first week, the Government already had to expand the number of collective shelters for IDPs, from the initially activated 325 to 700. These collective shelters should be open to all nationalities, including non-Lebanese, within an inclusive emergency response. At the fast pace of displacement, shelters are quickly reaching maximum capacity. As of 8 March, more than 117,000 displaced people are sheltering in 538 collective shelters; but as illustrated by the overall displacement figures, they only account for about 23% of those displaced as others are staying with relatives, renting apartments, sleeping in their cars or on the streets. Government hotlines are open to help direct people to available support.

According to UNHCR's data, some 244,500 refugees known to UNHCR were living in areas directly affected by airstrikes and evacuation orders before 2 March. Just one week into the escalation and in a very volatile and fluid situation, UNHCR has activated its refugee displacement tracking tool, which will provide a more detailed snapshot of the impact of the hostilities on the refugee population, though several Syrian refugees known to UNHCR have already tragically been confirmed killed in the attacks.

During the first week of the escalation, Masnaa and Al-Qaa were the only official border crossing points with Syria open. Departures have notably increased, according to the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Syria, with 70,673 Syrians from 2 – 7 March, alongside nearly 7,000 Lebanese. Arida border crossing point opened for foot traffic as of 7 March. The Lebanese authorities confirmed that overstay fees are currently waived, and individuals without documents may cross using UNHCR documentation (Refugee Certificate or Voluntary Return Forum). In addition, crossings through unofficial points have been reported, along with reports of exploitation by smugglers.

In a country already grappling with deep socio-economic crises and eroded infrastructure, needs will skyrocket as aerial attacks and evacuation orders continue. Amid fear and uncertainty, people urgently need protection and safe and dignified places to go.

UNHCR remains firmly committed to support the Government-led response, by continuing life-saving protection activities and responding to the emergency. UNHCR currently has over 300 staff and 13 partners, of which 9 are local NGOs, on the ground. We are working, in close coordination with the Government and its authorities, with and for displaced and otherwise affected populations, and delivering critical protection services and essential items across the country. To the fullest extent possible, UNHCR will maintain its regular life-saving programmes for the refugee population, who need these even more now.

In situations of internal displacement, UNHCR plays a coordination and response role within sectors it co-leads, while maintaining overall responsibility for the refugee response according to its Mandate. To respond to the growing humanitarian needs of displaced Lebanese and refugees, UNHCR with partners are [delivering lifesaving protection activities, shelter and core relief items \(CRI\), and cash assistance](#).

Protection

As co-lead of the Protection Sector with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), UNHCR is coordinating the emergency protection responses for displaced populations. UNHCR's operational refugee protection activities are ongoing and have been adapted to include appropriate support to displaced refugees. Many of UNHCR's protection services remain available to vulnerable Lebanese.



UNHCR continue to engage with displaced populations to ensure their voices are heard.
©UNHCR

Response during 2-8 March

- In response to the rising number of Syrians returning following the new escalation, UNHCR has scaled-up its protection and border monitoring, which indicates that some of the Syrians now returning had already planned to go back, while others tell us that they are leaving due to hostilities in Lebanon, under duress. UNHCR Lebanon is also coordinating closely with UNHCR Syria teams, across the border to help ensure that those returning receive appropriate support and assistance.
- UNHCR's partners, community-based protection networks, and the National Call Centre are fully mobilized and are fielding calls and queries from refugees and displaced Lebanese, providing referrals where appropriate, psychosocial support and helping families navigate questions about safe spaces and available services.
- Of the 21 Community Development Centres (CDCs) UNHCR supports nationwide, 13 remain operational while eight, located in Baalbek, the South, and Beirut's Southern Suburbs, are closed due to the security. CDCs are receiving displaced refugee and Lebanese families and providing information, making referrals, and psychosocial support. Despite 15% of the 330 Outreach Volunteers being displaced, the rest are out in their communities providing support, information and referrals.
- To support the dissemination of information by the Government, UNHCR launched a [dedicated Emergency page](#) on its HELP website in Arabic and English, a platform refugees are familiar with and often refer to. This page, together with UNHCR's [WhatsApp channel](#), provides key messages and up-to-date information on Government support.
- Due to the security situation, as of 6 March, UNHCR's Case Processing Centre in Beirut has shifted all appointments to remote modality until conditions are deemed safe. Refugees were informed via SMS.

Unmet needs

- The ongoing airstrikes are creating acute levels of fear, stress, and uncertainty among displaced and affected communities. Current resources are extremely limited. Without additional funds, UNHCR will not be able to deliver immediate, essential Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services, increase case management including for at risk children and gender-based violence survivors, enhance protection monitoring and enhance community-based protection capacity.

Shelter and Core-Relief Items (CRIs)

As co-lead of the Shelter and CRI Sector with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), UNHCR is coordinating the emergency shelter and CRI-delivery response for displaced populations.



UNHCR delivers plastic sheets, blankets, mattresses and other core-relief items to an emergency collective site in Bekaa. ©UNHCR

With the onset of the emergency, UNHCR immediately started distribution on 2 March of CRIs to Government-activated collective shelters. UNHCR had stocks in the warehouse to support 30,000 displaced families (150,000 people) with CRIs – mainly in collective shelters - to ensure that families fleeing with nothing have mattresses, blankets, and other essential items as soon as possible on arrival. Regular CRI kits distributed to IDPs include mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, solar lamps and jerry cans. To ensure the CRIs reach as many IDPs in need as quickly as possible, UNHCR delivers these essential items from its warehouse through its NGO partners, with the support of operational partners, and to the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) teams in municipalities with a high concentration of IDPs in collective shelters – which in turn distributes the items onward to collective shelters in need of mattresses, blankets and the other CRIs.

UNHCR and partners are also putting up partitions for privacy and carrying out minor works to turn [150 pre-identified public buildings into habitable collective shelters](#), in support of the Government's [emergency shelter response](#). Life-saving support to informal tented settlements (ITS) hosting refugees will continue as planned, ensuring that ongoing services and assistance are not interrupted despite the onset of the emergency

Response during 2-8 March

- UNHCR has provided support across 234 collective sites nationwide (19 in Akkar, 24 in Baalbeck-Hermel, 50 in Bekaa, 19 in Beirut, 57 in Mount Lebanon, 4 in Nabatiyeh, 40 in the North, and 31 in the South) delivering a total of 163,818 CRIs, assisting 61,887 affected individuals (13,776 households). Main items provided include 54,819 blankets, 55,833 mattresses, 37,073 sleeping mats, 6,610 solar lamps, 6,671 jerry cans, and 2,812 sleeping bags.
- Despite the Government's commitment to an inclusive emergency response, UNHCR's protection monitoring and humanitarian partners are reporting limited access for non-Lebanese populations, including Syrian refugees, in some locations. In response, UNHCR and humanitarian partners are working closely with the Government to facilitate access to safe shelter options and needs-based assistance for all displaced families, regardless of nationality.
- Emergency-related dashboards from the Shelter sector have been consolidated and is accessible here: [2026 Lebanon Escalations Response Tools](#).

Unmet needs

- Many of the collective shelters identified by the Government are public buildings and primary schools that require minor rehabilitation works to make them barrier-free for IDPs with limited mobility and the installation of privacy partitions, to meet basic habitability standards. Due to limited funding, UNHCR and partners can only support approximately 150 out of the 700 shelters so far activated.
- UNHCR's stock of CRIs is expected to run out soon due to the high and rapidly rising demand. If attacks and evacuations continue at the current rate and no additional stocks are sourced, UNHCR will



UNHCR and partners unload core-relief items at a collective site in Batroun on 2 March. ©UNHCR

not be able to support the Government and its regional and local authorities to respond to life-saving shelter and basic needs of highly vulnerable displaced people.

Cash Assistance

UNHCR co-chairs the Cash Working Group (CWG) alongside the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and World Vision International (WVI). The CWC facilitates overall coordination of the different humanitarian actors providing cash assistance.

Cash assistance remains vital lifeline, and preferred modality, for vulnerable refugee households, helping them meet urgent needs while preserving their dignity, choice, and resilience. Given the presence of functioning markets and the availability of goods, cash remains the most efficient and effective assistance modality. UNHCR's cash assistance programs include multi-purpose cash, cash for protection, emergency protection cash and return cash grants.

The Government of Lebanon, through the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), has activated the Shock Responsive Safety Net (SRSN) to provide rapid multipurpose cash assistance for vulnerable Lebanese affected by the escalation, it enables immediate one-off payments of up to USD 145 to households in areas affected by evacuations. As of 8 March, MoSA reported that approximately 185,000 individuals have received assistance.

Response

- UNHCR aims to reinforce and complement the SRSN by providing emergency multipurpose cash assistance to displaced refugees. UNHCR plans to leverage the Government's data collection exercise to strengthen support to affected refugee households. UNHCR's response will align with the SRSN's targeting methodology, transfer values, and duration of support.
- UNHCR activated its Emergency Protection Cash Assistance (EPCA), a one-time grant of USD 150, to help address the pressing protection concerns of the most vulnerable displaced refugees. Following assessment, nine grants have been disbursed as of 6 March, with numbers set to increase.

Unmet needs

- Since the Government's SRSN covers only Lebanese households, while refugee families are similarly affected and becoming displaced, UNHCR is seeking to provide emergency multipurpose cash assistance to refugees affected by the escalation, in coordination with MoSA. This support is essential to help refugee families, who were already highly vulnerable before the new escalation, meet basic needs such as food, shelter, hygiene items, and other essentials, for a minimum of three months. Without additional resources, UNHCR will be unable to reach the most vulnerable households, putting thousands of refugee families at further risk.

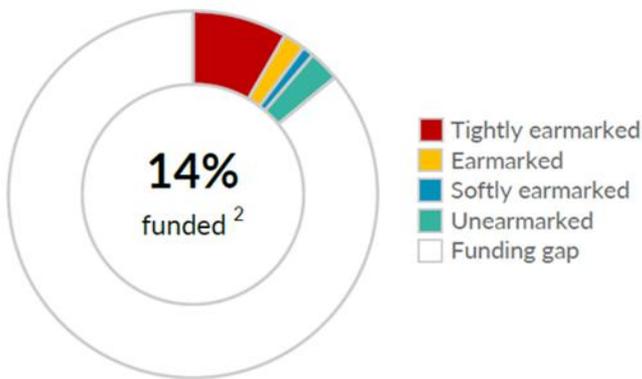
Funding (as of 28 Feb 2026)

USD 472.3 million

Requested for Lebanon operation in 2026

UNHCR is currently **14%** funded against \$472.3 million required to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of refugees in Lebanon. Without additional resources, UNHCR and its partners will be unable to scale up assistance to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of newly displaced families now seeking safety and support. **UNHCR will be a part of the Lebanon Flash Appeal to be launched shortly.**

Flexible, unearmarked funding is especially critical at this moment. It allows UNHCR to act immediately in emergencies, allocating resources where needs are greatest, and adapting to rapidly evolving situations. These unearmarked contributions often serves as a **catalyst in the first moments of a crisis**, enabling life-saving actions when it matters most.



UNHCR & PARTNERS PRESENCE

UNHCR maintains presence in Lebanon through its Country Office and three Field Offices (Beirut, Tripoli, and Zahle) with a workforce of more than 300 staff. We deliver our programs with 13 I/NGO partners (9 national, 4 international) and in close coordination and collaboration with the Government of Lebanon.



UNHCR is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to this operation

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