



Middle East Situation Lebanon - Flash Update #2 9 – 15 March 2026

UNHCR Representative in Lebanon, Karolina Lindholm Billing visited a government collective site in Tripoli and met with displaced Syrian refugee families who had fled the airstrikes and evacuation warnings. ©UNHCR



People Forced to Flee

831,002

Displaced people registered through Lebanon's government relief platform (source MOSA 15 March at 19:00)

130,715

Internally displaced people hosted in collective shelters (Source: DRM as of 15 March 2026 at 19:00)

620

Operational emergency collective shelters (Source: DRM as of 15 March 2026 at 19:00)

113,293

Syrians who have crossed back to Syria between 2-14 March (Source: Syria GAPC)

12,684

Lebanese have crossed to Syria between 2-14 March (Source: Syria GAPC)

Overview

For the past two weeks, Lebanon faced a rapidly worsening and unpredictable security environment, in a context of wider regional escalation. Intensified aerial attacks and evacuation orders across multiple areas have driven further displacement and expanded humanitarian needs and exposed communities to sustained insecurity.

The insecurity is also directly affecting refugees, not least since Lebanon hosts the world's largest number per capita. Multiple Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) in Baalbek-Hermel were directly affected by strikes, with confirmed damage to 11 tents and displacement to other ITS or open areas.

As of 15 March, the Government reported 850 people have been killed and 2,109 injured since the escalation began. According to open sources, 21 Syrians have been killed, of whom nine were known to UNHCR, while 54 Syrians have been reported injured (eight known to UNHCR).

The United Nations Secretary-General [concluded a three-day solidarity visit](#) to Lebanon from 13-15 March. On the first day Secretary General Guterres launched the [Lebanon Flash Appeal](#) alongside Prime Minister Salam. The Appeal calls for USD \$308.3 million to provide lifesaving assistance and protection to one million affected people for three months. Under this Appeal, [UNHCR requires \\$61 million](#) to reach 600,000 affected people with protection, shelter and core-relief items, and cash assistance.

[Displacement is rising rapidly](#) as families flee affected areas in search of safety amid expanding Israeli evacuation orders and continued airstrikes. [As highlighted by the Minister of Social Affairs in the Flash Appeal launch](#) "1.3 million people have been affected, nearly half children and more than half women and girls". This includes the 831,002 individuals (including refugees) who as of 15 March had

self-registered as displaced in Lebanon on the [Government's Relief Platform](#). According to UNHCR's data, some 244,500 refugees known to UNHCR were registered as living in areas directly affected by airstrikes and evacuation orders before 2 March, and UNHCR's refugee displacement tracking tool will gradually provide a more detailed snapshot of the direct impacts on the refugee population.

As displacement increases, the Government continues to activate collective shelters with 620 open of the 700 identified, as part of phase II of the emergency shelter strategy. Government representatives have reaffirmed an inclusive emergency shelter policy, open to all nationalities, including refugees. Collective shelters are currently hosting 130,715 displaced persons, with newly opened shelters quickly reaching full capacity, especially those in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. However, most of the displaced people are staying with relatives, renting temporary accommodation, or sheltering in cars or on the streets. Overcrowding is increasingly common, with multiple families sharing single apartments to reduce costs amid soaring living expenses and limited housing options.

Three official border crossings are currently open: Arida (pedestrian only), Al-Qaa and Masnaa. The number of crossings saw 113,293 Syrians and 12,684 Lebanese who have crossed into Syria the last two weeks. The Government circular waiving overstay fees and fines, and re-entry bans remain in effect. However, reports of increasing movements through unofficial crossing points have been noted. This raises protection concerns of exploitation by smugglers.

Under the leadership of the Minister of Social Affairs and within the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) framework, UNHCR Lebanon co-leads the Inter-Sector Coordination Group with MoSA, OCHA and UNDP. It also co-leads the Protection and Shelter sectors and co-chairs the Cash Working Group.

In situations of internal displacement, UNHCR plays a coordination and response role within sectors it is co-leading with the Government and NGOs, while maintaining overall responsibility for the refugee response according to its mandate.

The escalation is driving extreme fear, anxiety, and psychological distress, particularly among communities already worn down by years of instability and repeated displacement. To respond to the growing humanitarian needs of displaced Lebanese and refugees, UNHCR with partners are delivering lifesaving protection services, shelter support, core relief items (CRIs), and cash assistance. [Protection remains at the centre of UNHCR and partners' emergency response](#). To the fullest extent possible, UNHCR will maintain its regular life-saving programmes for the refugee population, who need these even more now.

Protection

As [co-lead of the Protection Sector with the Ministry of Social Affairs \(MoSA\) and Oxfam](#), UNHCR is coordinating the emergency protection responses for displaced populations. UNHCR's 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, such as access to Community Development Centres (CDCs) and their services, and support and referrals through the National Call Centre.

UNHCR's partners, community structures, Outreach Volunteers (OVs), and the National Call Centre are fully mobilized and 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. UNHCR is reinforcing the capacity of outreach volunteers and CDCs. In addition, the capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs and their social workers in collective shelters will be supported.

To support the dissemination of information, emergency contacts, hotlines and services, UNHCR's [dedicated Emergency page](#) on its HELP website, in Arabic and English, is constantly being updated with the latest information and resources available. UNHCR's [WhatsApp channel](#) also provides key messages and up-to-date information.

In response to displacement, UNHCR enhanced protection and border monitoring, which finds that some Syrians had planned to return at this time, while fear linked to the hostilities have pushed some to leave due to *force majeure*. UNHCR Lebanon is coordinating closely with UNHCR Syria teams across the border to help ensure that those returning receive appropriate support and assistance.



At the Shakib Erslan School in Verdun, now sheltering 317 families from Beirut's southern suburbs, children gathered to colour & play while women prepared a shared meal to break the fast together. ©UNHCR

Response during 2-15 March

- Of the 21 CDCs UNHCR supports nationwide, 12 remain operational while nine, located in Baalbek, the South, and Beirut's Southern Suburbs, are closed due to the security situation. CDCs are receiving displaced refugee and Lebanese families and providing information, making referrals, and providing psychosocial support. CDCs located in safe areas continue to deliver regular activities.
- Despite 15% of the 448 Outreach Volunteers (Ovs) being displaced, they are out in their communities providing support, information and referrals. OVs referred 2,257 displaced refugees at heightened risk to available services.
- UNHCR disbursed Emergency Protection Cash Assistance (EPCA) to 255 refugee families as of 14 March 2026. It is a one-time grant of USD 150 to help address the pressing protection concerns of the most vulnerable displaced and crisis-affected refugees.
- Child protection services are provided and have helped ten separated children reunite with their families or find a community-based care arrangement. Psychosocial support for children, in the form of recreational activities, are being held at collective shelters across the country. These are well-received, with children demonstrating active participation and enjoyment throughout the sessions. Parents similarly emphasized the importance of such activities, giving the children a much-needed respite in the midst of insecurity and uncertainty. Case management is also available for those in need.
- According to UNHCR's protection monitoring and [UNDP's tension pulse](#), community tensions are rising. Some municipalities have introduced local notification requirements for newly arriving families, which has increased fear among displaced households. Cases of community reluctance to host displaced families has been observed.
- UNHCR's Case Processing Centre in Beirut reopened for walk-ins, while maintaining remote interviews as the preferred modality. Registration, documentation, and verification activities are ongoing.

Unmet needs

- 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 children at risk and sexual violence survivors,

enhance protection monitoring and enhance community-based protection capacity. Please see [UNHCR's emergency flash appeal](#) for more details.

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. To ensure CRIs reach as many Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in need as quickly as possible, UNHCR delivers CRIs from its warehouse through its NGO partners, operational partners, and to the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) teams in municipalities, which in turn dispatch the CRIs onward to collective shelters.

With the onset of the emergency, UNHCR immediately started distribution on 2 March of CRIs to operational collective shelters. UNHCR had stocks in place to support 30,000 displaced families (150,000 people) – mainly in collective shelters - to ensure that families fleeing with nothing have mattresses, blankets, jerry-cans, sleeping bags and other essential items as soon as possible on arrival.

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



UNHCR delivers plastic sheets, blankets, mattresses and other core-relief items to the Disaster Risk Management in Tyre. ©UNHCR

Response during 2-15 March

- As of 15 March, UNHCR assisted 67,566 affected individuals (15,647 households) across 375 collective shelters (51 in Beirut, 149 in Mount Lebanon, 54 in Bekaa, 19 in Baalbek-Hermel, 49 in the North, 19 in Akkar, 30 in the South and 4 in Nabatiyeh) distributing a total of 182,648 core relief items, including 59,756 blankets, 61,361 mattresses, 42,571 sleeping mats, 7,743 solar lamps, 7,771 jerry cans, and 3,446 sleeping bags..
- There continues to be insufficient safe shelter options for displaced non-Lebanese, despite the Government's commitment to an inclusive emergency response. However, thanks to coordinated efforts, several municipalities have started allocating shelters for non-Lebanese.

Unmet needs

- Many of the collective shelters identified by the Government are public buildings and primary schools that require partitioning for privacy and minor rehabilitation work to make the conditions, including bathrooms, more dignified and barrier-free for displaced people with limited mobility. Due to limited funding, UNHCR and partners can currently only support around 150 out of the 700 shelters so far activated.

- UNHCR's stock of CRIs is expected to run out soon due to the rapidly rising demand. If attacks and evacuations continue at the current rate and no additional stocks are sourced, UNHCR will 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.
- For highly vulnerable families renting or hosted in adequate accommodation, the provision of cash for shelter is another critical need, as it helps them maintain safe housing, avoid eviction, and reduce reliance on overcrowded or unsafe coping arrangements.



UNHCR delivers core-relief items to the Disaster Risk Management in Tyre. ©UNHCR

Cash Assistance

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

Cash assistance remains a vital lifeline and preferred assistance modality for vulnerable displaced households, helping them meet their 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.

Response during 2-15 March

- Since the Government's Shock Responsive Safety Net (SRSN) covers only Lebanese households, UNHCR is seeking to reinforce and compliment the SRSN by providing emergency multipurpose cash assistance to refugees affected by the escalation, in coordination with MoSA. UNHCR's response will align with the SRSN's targeting methodology, transfer value, and duration of support.
- MoSA, UNICEF and ILO activated an emergency cash support initiative for families of children and persons with disabilities affected by the conflict. This support complements the SRSN by helping displaced families, including non-Lebanese, cover extra costs associated with the displacement and crisis, including health care, assistive services, and basic needs. UNHCR is coordinating with the partners and providing disability data for the inclusion of refugees. The one-off financial assistance of USD 100 per household is expected to reach approximately 6,000 families with children with disabilities aged 0 to 19 (6,000 Lebanese, 2,000 non-Lebanese).

Unmet needs

- Emergency multi-purpose cash assistance is essential to help refugee families, who were already highly vulnerable before the new escalation, to cover essential food and non-food needs, including emergency shelter, transport, water, and hygiene products. Without additional resources, UNHCR will be unable to reach the most vulnerable households, putting thousands of refugee families at further risk.

UNHCR Emergency Appeal for Lebanon USD 61 million

The **Lebanon Flash Appeal** calls for USD \$308.3 million to provide lifesaving assistance and protection to one million affected people from March to May. Under this Appeal, **UNHCR's requires an \$61 million** to reach 600,000 displaced people with protection, shelter and core-relief items, and cash assistance.

The Appeals support the Government-led emergency response and enables humanitarian partners to rapidly scale up assistance across priority sectors over a three-month period.

As of the end of February 2026, UNHCR remained critically underfunded at 14 per cent – with overall needs totaling \$472.3 million. UNHCR's emergency appeal is therefore starting from a critical underfunded situation.

In this dynamic operational environment, flexible funding is vital for UNHCR to remain agile and ensure the response is efficient and adaptive in order to provide protection and assistance to the people who need it 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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