

UN INTER-AGENCY UPDATE

UNHCR, JULY 13-20, 2012

Highlights of the week:

- *Thousands of Syrians crossed through the Masnaa borders into the Bekaa yesterday, many from Damascus. Initial estimates by UNHCR in suggest that approximately 18,000 people crossed between Wednesday and Thursday with relatively few crossing on Friday. Verification is ongoing.*
- *In consultation with municipal authorities and local agencies, UNHCR estimates that some 1,500 persons remained in the Bekaa while others moved onward to other parts of Lebanon.*
- *Individuals crossing during Wednesday and Thursday indicated they were coming to Lebanon in response to security concerns but would go back to their homes once the situation was calmer.*
- *UNHCR and partners are assessing the profile and needs of newly arrived Syrians, with a particular focus on vulnerable people who may need immediate assistance.*
- *Reports of heavy fighting in Syrian areas close to the northern Lebanese border affected a number of villages and disrupted some humanitarian efforts. Coordination with Lebanese security authorities continues.*
- *Over 4,500 Syrian displaced were provided with essential food and non-food support in the North and water assessments revealed troubling levels of water contamination which are to be addressed.*
- *HRC reported that it was unable to cover secondary health care and was running out of funds for treatment of wounded persons. UNHCR has encouraged ongoing government support in the health area while working with other UN and health partners to bridge gaps and identify additional funding to meet these unanticipated additional needs*
- *Teacher training, summer activities, active learning programmes continued in the Bekaa and North Lebanon and advocacy on facilitating enrolment and accreditation continued.*
- *Shelter renovations continue to collective shelters and host families' homes. Identification of additional shelter options raised with government authorities as an urgent need.*

Numbers

Approximately 400 people (80 families) arrived in the North this week, while an estimated 18,000 people arrived through the Masnaa border over the past two days alone. UNHCR, along with the Government and involved partners, are

devising an immediate action plan to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable Syrian families.

In the meantime, over 30,000 displaced Syrians continue to receive assistance and support throughout the country, of whom 29,986 people are registered.



Protection and Security

Thousands of new arrivals were permitted access this week, most arriving through the Masna border

The security situation on the Lebanese-Syrian border, especially in the North, remains of concern as fighting within Syria continues to affect a number of Lebanese border villages including, Dabbabiyeh, Al Nura and Bqaiia. This insecurity in Wadi Khaled caused delays of services as UNHCR and partner staff were unable to access the field on a number of occasions.

In Tripoli, celebratory gunfire was heard in anti-regime neighbourhoods following the announcement of the deaths of three top Syrian officials. Retaliatory gunfire from pro-regime areas killed two and wounded several more. UNHCR is closely monitoring the situation both in Tripoli and at the border for any possible repercussions.

This week, 12 wounded Syrians were admitted to hospitals.

North Lebanon

Protection

Heavy shelling intensified at the Lebanese-Syrian border affecting a number of villages in Akkar, Fraidis, Tikrit and Wadi Khaled. Despite the insecure borders, displaced Syrians continue to enter Lebanon.

UNHCR and DRC met with families living in border villages affected by recent shelling and cross-border clashes, assessing their physical protection, access to assistance, feeling of safety and willingness to relocate. The Fraidis collective shelter which is located 1.25 km away from the Lebanese-Syrian border is no longer considered an option

for refugee relocation until a positive security assessment.

UNHCR's protection team also visited the two official border crossing points in Al Arida and Baqaiia and met with the General Security Office (GSO) officials to develop an efficient coordination and information exchange mechanism.

DRC outreach workers conducted an urgent needs assessment at a collective shelter established by a private donor at the abandoned Dr. Hussainy Hospital in Tripoli. Currently, 107 individuals are living in this shelter, almost half being children. DRC identified 19 families within the shelter who are not yet registered with UNHCR and advised them on the procedure.

Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC) social workers are also carrying out needs assessments and home visits in Tripoli.

Registration and new arrivals

Despite intensifying tension at the Lebanese-Syrian border, approximately 400 Syrians (80 families) reportedly crossed into north Lebanon this week, mainly to the Wadi Khaled area.

The first phase of centralized registration in Bire ended this week, registering 325 people (84 families). This brings the total number of displaced Syrians registered in north Lebanon to 18,749. There are an estimated 400 additional families awaiting registration in Akkar.

Registration in Tripoli continues on a door-to-door basis, with the assistance of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). To date, 5,123 persons have been registered in Tripoli.

UNHCR is developing a registration mechanism to cover Tripoli and address

the needs in Akkar and Wadi Khaled. UNHCR has so far identified a potential centralized registration site in Tripoli and will commence activities following assessments with the HRC next week.

Distribution

UNHCR, the DRC and the World Food Programme (WFP) commenced July distribution in Kawachra and Halba, assisting 4,675 displaced Syrians with food, hygiene and baby kits. Caritas Lebanon Migrants Centre (CLMC) distributed food vouchers, bed sheets and blankets in Tripoli.

Following discussions between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and MoSA, the Halba and Rajm Issa schools are now approved to be central distribution sites. The MoE has also allowed for all abandoned schools in Akkar to be used as potential distribution sites.

Additionally, the WFP and DRC finished assessing local grocery shops in Akkar and selected 25 shops to participate in the voucher system due to start in August.

Community Services

Rehabilitation of the Women Charity League center in Halba began this week and is expected to be finalized by 10 August. Skills training classes, such as sewing and hairdressing will be offered to 43 women from Machha, Tal Izfeir and Mafraaa Kouch. Two volunteers from the displaced community will assist the trainers in conducting the sessions.

Education

The last teacher training sessions for the Summer Accelerated Learning Program (SALP) finished both in the North and the Bekaa. Instructor guides and the school lesson plans were distributed in preparation for the start of classes next

week; the SALP will continue for 9 weeks total.

Additionally, a training on how to plan activities and different games for child friendly spaces was conducted as these spaces will run in parallel to the SALP course throughout the summer. Over 580 children are benefitting from remedial classes, SALP and child friendly spaces in the North.

Shelter/Water and Sanitation (WASH)

Assessments of two potential collective shelters in Tekrit were held this week as teams continue to locate housing options for displaced families. One structure has the capacity to host 80 people (16 families) and the other, 300 people (40 families).

UNHCR and DRC also completed the construction of two prefabricated houses in the back yard of the Fraidise collective shelter. Discussions to construct similar prefabricated houses in the Ibra collective shelter are underway.

The Norwegian refugee Council (NRC) continued minor rehabilitation of host family homes in Akkar. Two houses completed rehabilitation work bringing the total number of renovated host family homes to 34. An additional 19 houses received payments to start renovations, bringing the total number of houses receiving shelter rehabilitation payments to 144. NRC also distributed shelter tool kits to fifteen houses in Akkar.

ACTED completed a report on the WASH assessment conducted in Tripoli and north Lebanon between May and June. The assessment identified emergency WASH needs and gaps of most

vulnerable displaced Syrians and host families by assessing the quality of water, quantity and access to water, sanitation needs, and the need for hygiene promotion. The assessment which took place in a number of villages in Akkar, Wadi Khaled and Tripoli found that there were troubling levels of water contamination at the source, tanks and faucets. ACTED has called for the distribution of emergency hygiene kits, basic training on water tank maintenance and the launch of a hygiene promotion campaign for displaced Syrians living in overcrowded spaces. Furthermore, ACTED recommend the provision of additional latrines in large overcrowded buildings, replacing unsanitary family water tanks and the distribution of chlorine strips.

Health

Despite the HRC's decision to stop covering the cost of secondary health care for displaced Syrians, coverage of primary health care continues in three centers in north Lebanon: the Makassed primary health care center (PHCC), the Machha center and the Karameh center in Tripoli. Free consultations and vaccination for children under the age of seven are provided to the displaced through these centers. UNHCR and IMC are currently covering the costs of secondary health care cases in urgent need and on an exceptional basis; gaps remain as not all secondary health care cases can be assisted due to lack of funding.

The International Medical Corps (IMC) conducted trainings with primary health care providers on how to promote better health within society, risk management for health care organizations and ways of improving communication skills within the health sector. These trainings aim to

increase the capacity of local PHCC's assisting the displaced.

UNFPA also conducted focus group discussions in the Qwadeh village on reproductive health and gender-based violence among Syrian women and girls.

Assistance in the Bekaa Valley

Registration

An estimated 18,000 displaced Syrians streamed across the Masnaa border between Wednesday and Thursday with the situation much calmer by Friday. The majority of new arrivals have come from Damascus following recent security incidents in the Syrian capital. Reports vary between 8,500 and 30,000 Syrians arriving in the past two days, numbers far exceeding the previously estimated average of 500 people (100 families) arriving on a weekly basis. The border point was, however, quiet today.

UNHCR and partners are now in the field verifying numbers and assessing the profile and needs of newly arrived Syrians, with a particular focus on vulnerable people who may need immediate assistance.

Initial findings indicate that the new arrivals have moved on toward other areas in the country and are either accommodated with relatives, friends or are renting accommodations.

Registration teams began reporting slight increases in the daily flow of people approaching UNHCR registration centers.

Registration in West Bekaa started on Wednesday and is expected to take up to six working days to be completed in that area. UNHCR is planning the next registration exercise in Hermel, followed by Zahle.

UNHCR registered 623 people in Baalbeck this week bringing the total number of registered individuals in the Bekaa to 10,152.

Distribution

UNHCR, DRC, WFP, World Vision and Action Contre la Faim distributed food, hygiene and baby kits to 295 displaced Syrians (59 families) and 1,475 host Lebanese (295 families) across the Bekaa. DRC conducted distribution through door-to-door visits in Al Hermel, Al Fakiha Al Ain and Aarsal.

UNFPA also distributed sanitary napkins in north and central Bekaa.

IOCC/ActAlliance distributed 161 hygiene kits to displaced Syrians through the Greek Catholic Church in Zahle.

Education

Agencies involved in the response to education needs continue to conduct summer activities with the aim to prepare Syrian students for the next academic year.

SCS started mapping of operational schools in the Bekaa area that have the capacity to host Syrian students at the start of the next school year.

SCS also developed an information note on education services provided so that Syrian parents can enrol their children in relevant activities conducted in their respective neighbourhoods.

Through the MoE, UNHCR has developed a sensitisation and information campaign among local school principals about the MoE decree allowing displaced Syrian children to enrol in public schools. School principals will be briefed about the kind of efforts needed from their end

to facilitate the Syrian children's enrolment, in addition to the enrolment procedures established by relevant partners.

In light of very positive results achieved by UNICEF's active learning programme in the summer day camps, UNICEF is currently devising a plan in cooperation with Iqra' Association, to enhance to capacity of other local and international organizations looking to engage in similar educational projects.

Health

UNHCR, IMC and partners provide primary health care services to displaced Syrians through eight centers and one mobile unit in the Bekaa. This includes the provision of consultations, lab and radiology tests, medications and vaccinations. In addition, partner agencies conduct regular home visits to provide psycho-social support and conduct necessary protection monitoring.

Through the mobile medical unit, Caritas Migrant Center provided Syrians with over a 100 consultations and nursing care services in Taalbaya, Zahleh, Baalbeck, Ain and Sawire. The main health problems detected were bronchitis, anemia, abdominal pain, gastrointestinal diseases and hyperthermia. All cases in need of hospitalization were referred to relevant hospitals or partners for treatment.

Just as in the North, secondary health care is tied by a limited funding capacity in the Bekaa. In June, the Qatari Red Crescent has generously provided 500,000 USD to fill in gaps. This amount should suffice until the end of October. UNHCR, IMC, and other partners are lobbying for additional funds in order to

cover secondary health care costs until the end of the year.

On July 17, IOCC/ACTAlliance, in cooperation with the American University of Beirut (AUB) and World Vision (WV), continued 'Nutrition for Emergencies' training for Lebanese health workers at the AUB farm north Bekaa.

This comes as part of a series of trainings aimed to equip Lebanese health workers with the theoretical and practical knowledge in nutrition and proper infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies. This will help to preserve the health and nutritional status of vulnerable groups affected and will continue to be provided through the end of August.

Shelter

In light of the recent influx of thousands of Syrians to the Bekaa in the past two days, the identification of shelter solutions has become a pressing priority. UNHCR, along with specialized agencies including NRC and DRC have been conducting mapping and assessments in order to locate public structures able to host large numbers of displaced people in the event of a mass influx. UNHCR and partners are now in contact with government authorities in order to further these efforts. DRC is currently awaiting the MoE's approval to begin the rehabilitation of two selected public schools. DRC is also working to identify a shelter location where displaced families living in Al Makassed school in Bar Elias can be transferred before the start of the school year.

NRC finalized a list of shortlisted host family homes that need to be rehabilitated in Aarsal. Their implementation will start within the

coming week. A similar assessment in Baalbeck will be completed next week.

In addition, preparations are now underway to rehabilitate three large collective shelters in Aarsal and Al Fakiha with the capacity to capacity to host up to 35 families each.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

DRC and Sawa Organization began the first stage of the rehabilitation of the mobile theater in Baalbeck. They have also started training 'animateurs' to facilitate recreational activities through this QIP.

In collaboration with Josour El Nour Association, DRC is also planning to establish a cine club in Aarsal. DRC is currently procuring the needed equipment to start implementing the project.

For more information on Syrian displacement in Lebanon, please visit the Lebanon page on the webportal:

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. There you will find facts, figures, and 'who does what', as well as updates on food and non-food items distributed per area and by agency.