

UN Inter-Agency Response for Syrian Refugees

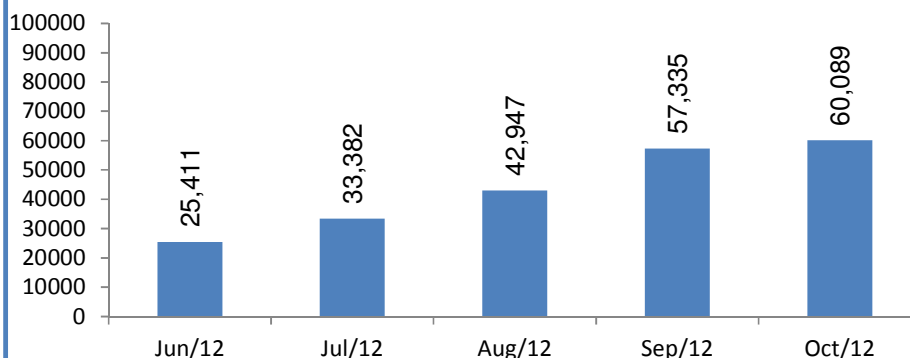


Highlights of the week

- 85,239 people are currently receiving assistance through UNHCR and partners, over 60,000 of whom are registered;
- UNHCR registered 4,000 people this week;
- Over 19,000 refugees received food vouchers and kits, hygiene and baby kits, and blankets;
- An additional 4,500 students enrolled in public schools this week, bringing the total number of Syrian refugee students registered for school to 7,852;
- Winter preparations are underway including stockpiling winterization items and flood-proofing shelters.

UNHCR Registered

■ Total Active Syrians (as of the end of each month)



Registration and New Arrivals

Over 85,200 Syrians are receiving protection and assistance in Lebanon through the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and UN and NGO partners. Of this number, 60,089 are registered, with an additional 25,150 people having been in contact with UNHCR to be registered.

UNHCR registered over 4,000 refugees this week at its centers in Tripoli, Baalbeck, and Beirut.

Current distribution of registered population is as follows:

North Lebanon: 33,549

Bekaa: 24,905

Beirut: 1,635

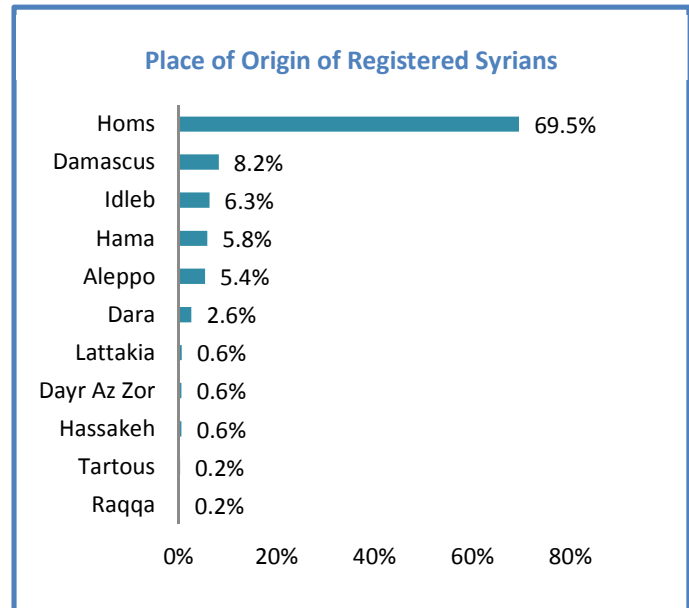
The majority of individuals have come from Homs, Hama, Idleb, Aleppo, and Damascus.

Among the new arrivals this week were some 1,000 people (200 families) who crossed into Wadi Khaled from Damascus, Homs and Aleppo, including over 50 families arriving from Qweishat and Tal Farah following intense security problems there. Many of these families subsequently returned while the remainder continue to stay with family or friends' houses in Rama, Rajm Issa, and Amayer. DRC visited over 800 newly arrived refugees in the area to address urgent needs and assisted vulnerable people with non-food items and food vouchers.

UNHCR continues to operate fixed registration centers in Beirut and in Tripoli. In the Bekaa, the Office has been doing mobile registration until a fixed location is identified. Initial registration in Baalbeck was concluded this week and a temporary registration premise was set-up in Aarsal where many refugee families are residing. Registration in the area will begin on October 8.

In south Lebanon, UNHCR will begin formal registration on October 22 through Caritas' premises in Ghazieh, Sidon. An expected 10,000 Syrians are waiting to be registered in the area.

For refugees who are unable to access the registration centers, UNHCR is collaborating with local authorities, NGOs and local partners to facilitate their transportation.



Protection

With a growing number of Syrian refugees fleeing to impoverished areas in Lebanon, protection concerns requiring urgent follow-up continue to surface. Among the most pressing problems identified by UNICEF this week are refugee parents marrying off their teenage daughters in order to protect them from dire living conditions. The idea is that marriage will provide their daughters with an opportunity to settle with men living in better conditions. Another problem identified is refugee boys skipping school and remedial classes to assist their parents in harvesting crops or for work in barber shops. To help reduce these risks, UNHCR and partners are trying to meet the financial pressures that lead families to take these desperate measures. Focus group discussions with refugee parents, women, and children have been key in identifying needs and risks and designing programmes to address them.



Al Beereh Registration centre - A Syrian family who arrived to north Lebanon crossing Wadi Khaled register at UNHCR registration centres. Photo @ UNHCR/ Salah Malkawi/ July 2012

The importance of birth registration is being disseminated through the refugee community. Only accredited hospitals can issue birth certificates and refugee women need to be aware of this important fact before deciding to give birth in non-accredited clinics.

UNHCR, UNICEF, and Save the Children International (SCI) continue to work to improve referral mechanisms – so that those with specific needs are appropriately advised and can access needed services. Related to this is training to front line health and social workers from MOSA Social Development Centers (SCDs) on how to detect protection risks and how to improve referral mechanisms.

Syrian refugees held in detention for illegal entry/stay in Lebanon continue to be of concern to the Office. UNHCR met with General Security Office (GSO) and agreed on modalities to improve access to Syrians detained in GSO retention facilities who expressed the wish to meet with UNHCR.

Security

Shelling from Syrian territory continued to hit border towns in Wadi Khaled and various shooting incidents were reported in Tripoli. Fortunately there was no loss of life and no disruption of operations, material loss or human casualties.

The Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces deployed their troops in Baalbeck on October 3 reportedly in response to a personal feud that erupted in the area. On the same day, three Lebanese nationals were reportedly killed in an explosion in the town of Nabishit in the Bekaa.

UNHCR and partners continue to exercise vigilance in the delivery of their programmes while working to ensure that refugee families are residing in safe areas.

Distribution

DRC concluded distribution in Tripoli and the Bekaa with over 17,000 people receiving WFP food vouchers, WFP food kits (for those newly registered), UNICEF baby kits and UNHCR hygiene kits. UNHCR and DRC also distributed food kits to some 450 Lebanese who have recently fled Syria to the Bekaa. In the meantime, Makhzoumi Foundation and Caritas Migrant Center distributed food kits and hygiene kits to refugee families in Beirut and Sidon.

In readiness for winter, UNHCR and partners are stockpiling blankets and other winterization items

Caritas Migrant Center also distributed food kits, hygiene kits, and blankets to some 2,000 people (392 families) in the Bekaa and Tripoli.

In readiness for winter, UNHCR and partners are stockpiling blankets and other winterization items. UNHCR is also liaising with partner and donor agencies to ensure the sustainability of such services throughout the cold winter months.

Education

School enrolment is progressing, with 7,852 children currently registered for the academic year. UNHCR, UNICEF, Save the Children International (SCI) and Mouvement Social are supporting refugee families by covering tuition fees and providing educational supplies.



A Syrian refugee student, centre, concentrates on the board during the French language class at the Lebanese school he is attending in Wadi Khaled.
Photo © UNHCR

School commenced on September 24, but the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) is allowing Syrian children to register up until October 10. The MoEHE is also inviting school directors to again discuss the issue of allowing Syrian students to enroll in Lebanese public schools, following reports of some school directors who remain reluctant to do so.

It is undeniable that refugees face serious challenges adjusting to the Lebanese curricula. Fortunately, past experience with Iraqi refugees demonstrates that adjustment is indeed possible. The adjustment process is easier for primary school children. Provision of necessary

remedial support is key to children's success most particularly for secondary school youth. UNHCR and partners are enhancing and further developing educational support, especially for secondary school-age children (ages 14 and above).

The present enrolment rates –just under 50 per cent already enrolled- are promising however the issue of school capacity remains a challenge. SCI is assessing the capacity of schools against the enrollment lists to identify areas where capacity may be saturated. Various solutions are being explored to accommodate all students, including providing transportation for children to remote areas where schools have extra capacity.

Health

Many emergency health cases have been approaching UNHCR and the International Medical Corps (IMC) for assistance. In the North, 25 lifesaving cases were admitted to hospitals this week. The cost of secondary health care for these cases was covered by UNHCR, IMC, the Qatari Red Crescent (QRC), Arab Medical Doctors and the Islamic Coalition of NGOs. An additional five wounded cases in the North were covered by the QRC.

Unregistered refugees in need of emergency health care are approaching IMC on a daily basis in the Bekaa. These refugees are being fast-tracked for registration in order to receive health care assistance, which is causing delays for other registration cases. UNHCR and IMC are working to enhance the referral mechanism and capacity of registration teams in order to both expedite the emergency cases but also assist others in need of registration assistance.

Regarding mental health assistance, IMC began providing mental health services in two MOSA social development centres in Hermel, and are planning on working with the Tanayal Hariri Foundation's primary health care centre in the coming weeks.

Shelter

Shelter remains one of the most urgent issues. A mix of interventions are being used including, rehabilitation of abandoned schools and buildings, cash for rent, renovations to host family houses and installation of temporary shelters in municipalities who have expressed a need.

In north Lebanon, the Akroum mosque is undergoing renovations, including fixing the plumbing and electricity, and three pre-fab houses where single families can reside are being installed. DRC is installing 16 additional prefabs in Akroum with the help of eight skilled workers from the refugee community. Refugees are also assisting DRC in renovating the septic tank of the Mounseh shelter and finalizing rehabilitations on the Ibra shelter. Engaging refugees in the rehabilitation process not only provides a much needed work opportunity, but also allows them to take an active role in enhancing the livelihood for themselves and their families.



Pre-fab houses in north Lebanon. Photo @ UNHCR / July 2012

UNHCR and partners are also working to relocate 14 families living in active public schools, in addition to some 70 refugees living in the Rama shelter who need to move due to hostility from the host community. Some of these

refugees will be relocated to the Tekrit shelter next week while others have been offered alternatives by the local community.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is rehabilitating 165 host community homes across Akkar that are offering shelter to over 1,000 refugees (214 families). This initiative is imperative given that members of the host community, who are also in need of assistance, have been offering their homes to refugee families for many months. In the Bekaa, 85 host homes in Aarsal, Saadnayel and Al Fakeha are receiving similar assistance.

Another shelter option in the Bekaa is identifying and finishing unfinished homes, of which there are many in east Lebanon. NRC is rehabilitating over 30 such houses in Aarsal and six in Saadnayel with plans to finish an additional 40 houses across north and central Bekaa.

UNHCR's Water and Sanitation (WASH) expert visited several private lands in Majdal Anjar to identify sites to set-up DRC's pre-fab houses. Four potential sites were selected and DRC is currently negotiating with the municipality.

Homes are also being refit for refugee and host families to ensure protection during the cold and wet months. UNICEF is creating a flood-proofing initiative for small-scale WASH interventions this winter.