

UN Inter-Agency Response for Syrian Refugees

Beirut, December 31, 2012 – January 4, 2013



Highlights of the week

- Over 5,000 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR this week
- In a Cabinet session on Thursday, the Government's plan in response to the influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon has been approved
- UNICEF has reached an agreement with 5 partners for winterization activities in the Beqaa which will target 22,293 children
- 1,650 Syrian refugee children were enrolled in Lebanese public schools, bringing the total number to 10,000 children.
- This week 1,386 Syrian refugees in Lebanon received primary health care services
- UNHCR and Save the Children have started the distribution of fuel vouchers to 200 schools in North Lebanon and the Bekaa



Donor contributions for 2013



Funding is also received in private donations from the following countries: China, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, and Spain.

¹ EU funding is received from DEVCO and ECHO.

Registration and New Arrivals

Syrian refugees continue to cross into Lebanon in search of safety and security. The majority of them originate from Homs, Idlib, Damascus and Aleppo. Currently, more than 180,105 Syrian refugees receive protection and assistance from the Government of Lebanon, UNHCR and partner NGOs. Of this number 132,354 are registered with UNHCR and 47,751 are scheduled for registration.

Current distribution of the registered population is as follows:

North Lebanon: 67,350

Bekaa: 51,615

Beirut and South Lebanon: 13,389

With four registration centres across Lebanon, UNHCR registers approximately 1,500 refugees daily, and is continuing to increase its capacity in response to the great needs.

Newly arrived unregistered families continue to be assisted by UNHCR and partners. UNHCR offices throughout the country are working closely with local municipalities and other local actors to reach the most vulnerable unregistered refugees. With the cooperation of these local actors like Dar el Fatwa in Bekaa and heads of Municipalities in Dinneh in north Lebanon, UNHCR is providing unregistered vulnerable families with winter items, such as blankets, mattresses and kitchen sets.

Protection

At the Cabinet session on Thursday 3rd January, the government plan in response to the influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon was approved. A series of measures have been agreed upon aiming at protecting and supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon. According to the Minister of Social Affairs Mr. Wael Abou Faour these include "launching a diplomatic campaign to urge Arab and other friendly nations to share the burden with Lebanon; registering the refugees according to criteria suited to the nature of the Syrian-Lebanese relations, as well as tasking the interior minister with implementing a security plan."

This is a very welcomed step toward government leadership of the response. The plan sets out areas of needed interventions and the budgets required to implement them. It has been developed in close coordination with UNHCR in order to avoid overlaps with the inter-agency response plan recently revised last December. The inclusion of a Palestinian component is specifically noted and appreciated. UNHCR is now working with the government to bring the government plan and the regional response plan together in a consolidated document.

In south Lebanon, UNHCR and UNRWA coordinated efforts to ensure that Syrian refugees who settled in Palestinian camps are properly informed about registration process with UNHCR. UNRWA assisted with the distribution of information notes in the camps and started collecting the names of Syrians interested to register with UNHCR. The team also conducted home visits inside the camps in Tyr. Transportation to the UNHCR registration centre will be arranged for families who are unable to come on their own or fearing to leave the camp.

Security

The security situation was calm in Lebanon over the past week. No cross-border activities were reported. In north Lebanon, random personal disputes were reported in the suburbs of Tripoli at times escalating to shootings in the air and throwing of hand grenades, but incidents were quickly contained by the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and

Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). On 4 January, a large gathering was organized from Al Nour Square in Tripoli towards Prime Minister Mikati's residence. This was organized by the relatives of the Lebanese men killed in Tal Kalakh and families of the 'Islamists' detained in Roumieh prison.

In south Lebanon, clashes took place in Saida on 3 January which led to the death of one man and injured 3 others. The clashes were allegedly between members of the Popular Nasserite Organization and members of the Lebanese Resistance Brigades. The ISF and LAF were immediately deployed in the area to restore calm.

Distribution

UNHCR and partners continued the distribution of blankets, clothes vouchers and fuel vouchers in preparation for winter. This assistance will continue to newly registered refugee families. In north Lebanon all newly registered families will receive warm blankets. Families in the Tripoli area will receive clothes vouchers and families in Akkar and Wadi Khaled will receive fuel vouchers. In the Bekaa valley, registered refugee families will continue to be assisted with fuel vouchers whilst newly registered families will be provided with blankets.

In the Bekaa valley, in order to respond to the increasing need for assistance of newly arrived refugees, an agreement was reached with the local charity Dar el Fatwa to assist in distributing essential non food items to vulnerable families. UNHCR provided Dar el Fatwa with 700 mattresses and 1,800 blankets which are being distributed primarily in Central and West Bekaa. UNHCR will ensure that stocks are refilled as soon as items are distributed. Dar el Fatwa will inform UNHCR of additional needs and the programme will be expanded accordingly.

Furthermore, as part of the winterization programme, UNICEF reached partnership agreements with 5 NGOs for the distribution of winter clothing kits in Bekaa, targeting 22,293 Syrian children, including 2,000 Palestinian refugee children. These kits include boots, socks, a jacket, woolen hat, gloves and underwear.

Save the Children allocated funds for the distribution of vouchers for winter clothes and shoes targeting 2,000 refugee children.

Caritas/Medair finalised the distribution of 800 winterization kits targeting 90 families in Central Bekaa, Fayda, Saadnayel, Jdeta, Karak, Zahle and Ablah.

Education

This week 1,650 Syrian refugee children were enrolled in Lebanese public schools, bringing the total number to 10,000 children. UNHCR and partners continue to provide educational support to these children with tuition fees, school uniforms, stationary and text books. A total of 151 schools have received assistance from UNICEF benefitting over 30,000 Lebanese and refugee children.

Increasing the enrollment rate amongst Syria refugee children was one of the biggest challenges in 2012. Unlike the Syrian school system which is entirely run in Arabic, Lebanese schools teach math and sciences in either English or French, which few Syrian refugee children understand. The language barrier presented by the Lebanese curriculum is one of the main deterrents for Syrian refugee children. To help children cope with the change in curriculum, UNHCR and partners are providing after school remedial classes.

A number of schools teaching the Syrian curriculum are at risk of closing down due to a lack of funding. UNHCR and UNICEF together with the Ministry of Education (MEHE) are working on finding alternative schools for children concerned. Children who are willing to enroll in Lebanese public schools will be assisted and their tuition fees will be covered. Students who are unwilling to join the Lebanese school System can enroll in the Accelerated Learning

Programme which will be launched in February by UNHCR and UNICEF in coordination with the Ministry of Education.

Save the Children started the distribution of fuel vouchers to 150 schools in north Lebanon and Bekaa to help them pay for heating in the cold winter months.

Health

This week 1,386 Syrian refugees in Lebanon received primary health care services including consultations, diagnostic services, medications, treatment, referrals, and vaccinations.

Patients in need of secondary health care services continue to be referred to contracted hospitals whereby IMC ensures their admission and covers 85% of the cost. This week, 370 patients were admitted to IMC contracted hospitals (253 were inpatients and 117 were treated in the emergency room).

As many refugees arrive in Lebanon traumatized and require mental care, social outreach activities are carried out by IMC, social workers visit patients and if necessary refer them to specialised mental health services. This week 292 persons have been visited by social workers out of which 61 have been referred to psychologists or psychiatrists.

In addition, IMC provided awareness sessions on numerous health topics to 589 individuals. These sessions aim at improving health-related behavior and lifestyle. One awareness session was conducted in Tal Abyad in Bekaa in response to a scabies epidemic, scabies lotion, hygiene kits, and tooth brushes were distributed.

Shelter

The provision of adequate shelter for refugee families is one of the most pressing priorities. Refugees have so far managed to secure shelter by renting private accommodation, living with host community or in collective shelters which have been rehabilitated by UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). However, the need for alternative shelter options is on the rise as more and more families are struggling to cover the high rents particularly in urban areas. The Shelter sector working group has started to identify abandoned buildings as potential collective shelters to accommodate vulnerable families in need of shelter and create contingency capacity. Buildings with a total capacity to accommodate 394 families have been identified.

Water and Sanitation

UNHCR and partners continued their efforts to improve Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) conditions in refugee shelters.

ACF constructed latrines in Dal Hamie in Central Bekaa and distributed latrine cleaning kits targeting approximately 1,000 beneficiaries. Moreover, hand washing points benefitting more than 500 refugees in Bekaa have been installed. At household level, health promotion is carried out targeting more than 900 beneficiaries.