



Lebanon Inter-Agency Response: Syrian Refugees

1-7 June 2013



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH:

- 3,350 refugees received primary healthcare services this week including consultations, treatment, referrals, medication, vaccinations and diagnostic tests;
- 1,800 women and children benefited from vocational training, language classes and remedial classes this week this week;
- So far in June, over 90,000 refugees received shelter support;
- 35,000 refugees also received World Food Programme (WFP) food vouchers and food parcels;
- 8,400 refugees received clothes vouchers, summer blankets, quilts, kitchen sets, mattresses, recreation kits for children and other household items;
- 14,000 persons registered with UNHCR this month.

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

In the past week, some 14,000 persons registered with UNHCR bringing the total number of Syrian refugees assisted by UNHCR and partners to over 511,000 (437,604 people registered and 73,814 awaiting registration).

Current distribution of the registered population is as follows:

North Lebanon: 163,000

Bekaa: 150,000

Beirut and Mount Lebanon: 72,000

South Lebanon: 50,000

On June 4, a new registration call centre was launched and established in the Bekaa in order to further facilitate the process for an increasing number of refugees asking to be registered on a daily basis. The new system has led to a 100 per cent increase in scheduling capacity. Registration teams are also rolling out a number of additional technical improvements to further accelerate the process including the introduction of additional hotlines.

PROTECTION

Local authorities and municipalities reported the recent arrival of up to 4,000 refugees over the past week, with an increase of new arrivals in the Bekaa of some 500 people in comparison with last week. Accurate information regarding the arrival of refugees, particularly from Qusayr, remained challenging to obtain. Local contacts in the area reported that 1,800 refugees arrived in Aarsal between 1-20 May. As of May 20 however, the number of new arrivals fell sharply, coinciding with the escalation of events in the embattled town of Qusayr. Over the past week, an average of 15 families arrived daily in Aarsal, reportedly through the only two open passageways: Jarjeer and Flita.

The majority of families arriving in Aarsal are believed to have travelled onwards to other areas in Lebanon, particularly the North. The Aarsal municipality has indicated that on some days over 80 per cent of those arriving were making their way to Akkar through Beirut.

UNHCR and International Relief and Development (IRD) began providing legal assistance to Syrian refugees. The project aims to assist particularly vulnerable refugees with the prohibitive cost of the renewal of their residency permits. During the first week of implementation, 83 persons were reimbursed for the renewal of their residency permits. Refugees have also been counseled on the procedures to renew their passport, transfer their entry stamp onto their passport, registering their new-born children, and legal regularization.

Tensions between the Syrian and hosting communities increased over the past week. The lack of job opportunities continues to be a major cause of tension and in certain villages Syrian workers are being asked to leave in order to reduce competition while welcoming their families to stay in the villages. In light of these developments, UNHCR, UNDP, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and IRD are planning to implement community projects in the North to mitigate the risks of a possible escalation of tensions and create incentives for coexistence.

SECURITY

The security situation in Tripoli and in northern/eastern border villages remains highly volatile. Rockets and shelling hit a number of towns throughout the past week including Aarsal, Britel, Nahle, Hermel, Al Qaa, Baalbeck in the Bekaa, and Mounse, Rajm Beit Houssein in the North. Clashes between the rival neighbourhoods of Bab Al Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen are ongoing despite several attempts at a ceasefire. The absence of the latter has impeded humanitarian access to certain villages in the north and Bekaa. The registration centre in Tripoli was closed on Friday June 7 due to the tense and precarious security conditions in the city.

DISTRIBUTION

Over 8,400 refugees received clothing vouchers, summer blankets, quilts, kitchen sets, mattresses, recreation kits for children and other household items. These efforts are sponsored by UNHCR, UNICEF, DRC, CLMC, Handicap International, Makhzoumi Foundation, SHIELD and World Vision.

Over 35,000 refugees also received World Food Programme (WFP) food vouchers and food parcels. This month, WFP aims to assist over 451,823 beneficiaries with vouchers and 52,625 with food bringing the total number of refugees to be assisted to 504,457.

EDUCATION

UNHCR, Save the Children, World Child Holland (WCH), Terre des Hommes (TdH), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Amel Association and Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre (CLMC) are currently working in 39 schools nationwide providing Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs) aimed at preparing children who dropped out of school to reintegrate and enroll in the upcoming academic year.

Over 1,800 women and children benefited from vocational training, language classes and remedial classes this week. Similar activities have commenced at the Forum of the Handicapped in Tripoli. Classes are scheduled to benefit both Syrian and Lebanese nationals. In addition, an International Medical Corps mental health team will be present in the community centre every Friday to provide counselling and assistance.

In the South, an assessment was initiated this week with local schools and revealed that the majority of Syrian children are still facing difficulties adapting to the Lebanese curriculum. Despite reported difficulties, Marj Al Zouhour public school reported that three Syrian children were among the first ranked students. Meanwhile, students continue to benefit from after-school support in preparation for the upcoming academic year-end exams.

The Joint Education Needs Assessment (JENA) launched by the Ministry of Education, UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNESCO has been finalized with the preliminary analysis underway. Agencies reported difficulty reaching schools and communities in the North due to the security situation.

HEALTH

Over 3,350 refugees received primary healthcare services this week including consultations, treatment, referrals, medication, vaccinations and diagnostic tests. UNHCR, UNICEF, CLMC, International Medical Corps (IMC), Amel Association and Premiere Urgence (PU-AMI) have supported these efforts. In addition, 477 primary healthcare consultations were provided through two mobile clinics sponsored by Amel Association and IMC.

Over 4,500 refugees have benefited from health education sessions held by PU-AMI at primary health care centres and among refugee communities. IMC provided health awareness sessions to 1,296 individuals this week. The NGO also provided health education training in clinics in the South where health professionals will conduct community health education in their clinics, in mobile medical units and during outreach programmes in collective shelters.

A health event on the prevention of lice and scabies was held on Saturday June 1st at Makhzoumi Foundation targeting Syrian children between the ages of 5 to 10 years old.

Measles and polio vaccinations and the provision of vitamin A have continued in the Tripoli and Bekaa registration sites in collaboration with UNICEF. Some 2,700 children were vaccinated in Tripoli and 1,468 children were vaccinated in Bekaa this past week.

A total of 462 patients were admitted to hospitals supported by the operation in Beirut, South Lebanon, North Lebanon and the Bekaa this week. Another 413 patients received clinical and social consultations, diagnosis and treatment by IMC through its outreach and center-based services.

Children presenting particular psycho-social needs underwent a global evaluation done by the various specialists (child psychologists/psychiatrists, speech-therapists, psycho-motor therapists, and neurologists). Over the past week, 25 children and 27 adults have been assisted.

SHELTER

Syrian refugees are facing great difficulties in finding suitable and affordable accommodation. Many currently live in cramped and substandard shelters, or are left with no option but to live in scattered tented settlements in eastern Lebanon. Agencies continue to work on renovating these shelters to improve living conditions. So far in June, over 90,000 refugees received shelter support.

Over the past week, a number of families faced eviction or threats of eviction due to their inability to pay the rent and it is expected that more will soon be facing the same problem as families, over time, run low on finances. Shelter agencies provided rent to the most vulnerable families while trying to negotiate with the landlords for the decrease of rent fees and find a durable solution.

Around seven refugee families living in informal tented settlements in Rayak have spontaneously relocated to settlements in Dalhamiyeh. None of those who arrived in Dalhamiyeh reported any assault, injury or loss of property. Focal points suggest that around 90 families have relocated from informal settlements along the main road towards north Bekaa and also settled in Dalhamiyeh and nearby clusters. This trend could be due to heightened tensions between refugee and hosting communities. Agencies are currently assessing the situation and working to mitigate the risk of such tensions escalating.

UNHCR is working with local municipalities in the Bekaa to identify pieces of land where tented settlements accommodating a maximum of 20 tents each could be located. There are currently four such settlements initiated by Layan organization. UNHCR will also give technical advice about their layout and provide tents for these projects.

UNHCR, DRC, and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) are also working to identify sites where temporary shelters (t-shelters) – quickly-built prefabricated single family dwellings could be built. Pilot t-shelters will be initially built in the Bekaa valley with a view to replicating them in other areas in Lebanon.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

A recent UNHCR assessment revealed that 30 per cent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are in need of urgent WASH support and 12 per cent of refugee families reported at least one incidence of diarrhea related diseases in the last two weeks. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) agencies are increasingly prioritizing the provision of adequate and safe water, the rehabilitation/construction of sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion.

This week, more than 85,000 individuals benefited from hygiene kits and more than 2,000 received baby kits provided by UNHCR, DRC, CLMC, the International Committee for the Development of People (CISP), Makhzoumi Foundation, World Vision, Action Contre la Faim (ACF), PU-AMI, and SHIELD. Other WASH initiatives included the distribution of more than 170 water filters and seven cleaning kits in the Bekaa.

In addition, PU-AMI began work on the Mashta Hammoud water supply network in the North to ensure that the houses in the village have access to water.