

## Minutes of Northern Lebanon ad-hoc Inter – Sector Meeting

19 August 2019, 14:00 – 15:30

UNHCR Tripoli Office

<b>Chairperson(s)</b>	Anne Dolan (UNHCR) Alain Chatry (UNDP) Khaled Osman (MoSA)
<b>Agenda of the Meeting</b>	Updates on Raids and Demolition of Hard Structures in Northern Lebanon

### Introduction:

On August 9, 2019, an ad hoc meeting was organized by UNHCR, UNDP and MoSA with the northern Lebanon Inter – Agency partners to discuss the hard structure demolition situation in the North and coordinate the response. The meeting was followed by a meeting with all RNA partners in the North to recap on the coordination system, tools and reporting lines. It was agreed during the ad hoc Inter-Agency meeting that an Inter – Sector meeting be held in due time to provide updates to sector leads and key agencies involved in the response and to follow up on some of the action points from the meeting.

### Presentation on hard structures in informal settlements in the North:

The following key points were highlighted in the presentation:

- Raids were initiated in the Kherbet Daoud and Kweshra area by LAF and then extended to Bebnine, Qoubber Chamra, Minnieh – Markebta, Zouk Bhannine, Miniara, and Amayer – Ouadi Khaled;
- Asylum seekers living in tents in the North are concerned that they might be entitled to maintain only one layer of bricks, as this will increase the risk of flooding during winter.

### UNHCR briefing on meeting with LAFI:

On 19 August, a meeting was held between UNHCR and LAFI in northern Lebanon to discuss LAF's demolition instructions, criteria and plan. The following are the main outcomes of the meeting:

- General Murad mentioned that three bricks will from now on be permitted for refugees in informal settlements in northern Lebanon;
- The General urged UNHCR to inform both MoSA and MoIM about the new decision and criteria;
- In addition to the 3-brick layer, affected individuals were encouraged to dig trenches surrounding their tents to reduce the risk of flooding; (The General mentioned to UNHCR his own experience living in a tent and thus his awareness of the challenges);

- The General confirmed that all families living in informal settlements in the North have been notified of the High Defense Council decision;
- The General mentioned that all sites are currently in compliance, or have been informed to take action, and he thus does not foresee any further relevant demolitions or raids;
- The main purpose of LAF raiding the site in the morning, rather than during the day, was to reach Syrian before they go to work, in an attempt to verify their legal status in the country of asylum.
- UNHCR raised the impact of the aforementioned raids on children present in the sites, which the General acknowledged;
- The General however also mentioned that all asylum seekers should start planning their return to their country of origin;
- Decisions on demolitions' criteria and implementation are taken by LAFI and implemented by LAF.

#### Other discussion points:

- The August 2019 demolition activities in northern Lebanon were not in line with the criteria that were initially communicated at the national level, which mention that hard structures with walls (as a minimum) will be affected. A total of 345 of the 444 affected shelters consisted only of four or less layers of bricks, which were initially not mapped by the IA for planning purposes. Only five out of the 62 sites raided or visited by the LAF in August 2019 were within the initial list of sites at risk. It was further highlighted that in some sites even two or three layers of bricks were partially demolished by the LAF;
- The Inter-Agency Coordination Team in Beirut mentioned that rubble management is currently a challenge in Aarsal as well as in the North. A draft note on rubble management is being finalized at the national level. While it has been nationally agreed that humanitarian organizations will not to be directly involved in rubble management, organizations may still wish to provide technical assistance to municipalities and local efforts in on-site management of the rubble;
- The same reservation as the aforementioned was made/expressed by some donors that are funding community support projects through the provision of machinery to municipalities (such as trucks, Bobcats, etc..). Donors have agreed post advocacy efforts, to remain flexible about the use of the donated machinery in managing rubble;
- MoSA conducted field visits to URDA in Reyhannieh to monitor the demolition situation. URDA initiated the management of rubble through a contractor who will use the rubble in other construction sites (cost: 20 USD per truck of rubble). All the rubble will be removed from the site by 20 August 2019;
- URDA, with the support of a Qatari donor, will be rehabilitating 100 shelters in the Reyhannieh camp. A total of 40 of 100 planned shelters have been rehabilitated already. Additional support is feasible based on the needs;



- As highlighted by MoSA, URDA was informed by the LAF that no bricks are permitted. However, URDA will maintain one brick to strengthen the shelter structure and protect families from flooding;
- It was highlighted that the Reyhannieh site layout is fire-prone due to the close proximity of shelters to one another. As it will be very challenging to change the layout, precautionary measures are needed. URDA mentioned the presence of some fire extinguishers within all shelters, although expired;
- ICRC shared that shelter materials have been pre-positioned in the Bekaa for the Arsal situation, as well as in the North;
- ICRC is following up on Kherbet Daoud and will be providing affected HHs with timber and tarpaulins;
- Agencies raised that there is a lot of confusion among community members about the criteria that apply to walls in tents because of the conflicting messages sent by LAF/LAFI on the ground;
- MoSA expressed their willingness and readiness to further disseminate the decision of the Higher Defense Council (HDC). MoSA further elaborated that some of the HHs at risk have kept the structures despite being previously informed/notified to dismantle them;
- UNDP emphasized the need for MoSA and MoIM Coordinators in the North to clarify with their national counterparts and the army on the decision and messages that should be disseminated to both the affected population and humanitarian agencies;
- It was noted that the Child protection actors were quite slow in starting assessments and follow-up on child protection risks as a result of the raids and demolitions. By the time of the Inter Sector meeting, however, all partners had launched their activities in the affected sites;
- The WASH sector lead confirmed presence of partners in all affected sites and readiness to respond to emerging needs. Concern WW acknowledged issues in Bebnine 001, where access to carry out WASH interventions in the site in the past was limited. Concern WW will be following up on WASH related issues in the site after the demolition.
- Messaging to refugees was one of the pending issues from the ad hoc Inter Agency meeting. UNHCR reiterated in this regard that we should be careful not to act as the messenger on government decisions but at the same time inquire if refugees are aware that demolition may occur and to consider what actions they will take.

#### Sector Updates:

- CPWG is scheduled to take place this week where affected children concerns will be communicated with all sector partners to discuss the modality of the planned response;

- It was highlighted by the WASH sector lead that partners<sup>1</sup> are deployed in the field, however, no data has been collected fully or shared by partners yet with the sector. Information from partners indicate that no wash damages or needs have been identified to date. UNDP informed that during a donor visit to Bebnine, it was observed that some sewage pipes were clogged due to rubble;
- Protection sector/partners are monitoring the current demolition situation through partners in the field and community focal persons. **The Protection sector lead stressed the importance of immediately reporting any form of arrest/detention, even in sites that do not have any hard structures, as such arrests might lead to deportation;**
- The UNHCR protection team, in coordination with the legal partners, are following up on all arrested cases. UNHCR was informed on 19 August that all but nine of the detained individuals were released from detention, including seven individuals whose detention status is not clear;
- The Health sector lead will follow up with IOCC, which manages a Medical mobile unit, for visiting the affected sites and providing the needed medical services. It was further highlighted, that families in some sites are not receptive to PSS sessions as they are expressing their request first for their basic needs such as adequate shelter, CRIs, etc.
- The Health sector will coordinate with the Child protection sector in order to identify the needed mental health support to affected children;
- Basic Assistance: no referrals have been made to date;
- Livelihood and Social Stability: a tension task force meeting is scheduled to take place during the week of August 19 – 23, 2019 where the demolitions situation will be assessed and discussed. No intervention is yet planned;
- SGBV: two partners have mobilized activities to support affected women in informal settlements with Emotional Support Group activities;
- Education: no action is needed, as all schools are closed now;
- Shelter: follow up on needs in URDA and other affected sites; discuss the revision of EOS tools with the national shelter sector; follow up with shelter partner on updating their contingency stock and reporting on ActivityInfo

#### Activity Info / Resource Management:

- UNHCR urged all sector leads and partners to update Activity Info's contingency stocks database for inter and intra sector coordination;
- ICRC relocated 200 shelter kits to Aarsal and 93 to Akkar for Kherbet Deoud;
- UNHCR had allocated 181 NAK, 121 MRK and 121 LRKs for the north in June, and remainder of it could be dispatched for distribution;

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<sup>1</sup> Concern Worldwide, Solidarities International, and LebRelief in the North and GVC<sup>1</sup> in Akroum (as needs arise and referral from sector lead for the need to support)

- UNHCR have pre-positioned 45 NAK, 269 MRK and 1056 LRK in its warehouse in the north
- SCI have reported availability of 297 MRK and 141 NAK. SI also confirmed its capacity to respond with 116 NAKs, 175 MRKs and 200 LRKs should there be need.

#### Action Plan:

- Updating the EOS tool to incorporate North Lebanon situational indicators (mainly related to the type of shelters affected and shelter material needs) || Addition of a new category proposed: Short Wall Structures;
- Partners to report any information or reports of arrests or detention directly to Khaled Ghuniem ([GHUNEIMK@unhcr.org](mailto:GHUNEIMK@unhcr.org)) and Jorunn Brandvoll ([brandvol@unhcr.org](mailto:brandvol@unhcr.org));
- Sector leads to encourage all partners to report on Activity Info the current available contingency stocks;
- MoIM Coordinator in the north will share with the IA leads and partners the outcome of the national meeting which is scheduled on 20 August 2019 between MoIM and the Army;
- UNHCR to follow up with the Inter Agency Coordination team Beirut to check on the messaging used in Aarsal and explore what can be used for the North.