

## Minutes of Meeting Inter-Sector Coordination Group Meeting

<b>Meeting Location</b>	Hybrid: MS Teams & UNHCR 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room	<b>Meeting Date</b>	4 Apr 2025
<b>Chairperson(s)</b>	Dr. Ola Boutros, LRP General Supervisor (MoSA) Kristin Arthur, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR) Marianne El Haibe, Inter-Agency Coordinator <b>A.I.</b> (UNDP) Eyram Dzitrie, Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA)	<b>Meeting Time</b>	11:30 a.m. 13:30 p.m.
<b>Minutes Prepared by</b>	Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant (UNHCR)	<b>Meeting Duration</b>	2.00 hrs.
<b>Participants</b>	<a href="#">Annex 1</a>		
<b>Agenda</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Opening Remarks</a></li> <li>1. New Arrivals Response: North &amp; Akkar Governorates</li> <li>2. Tensions Overview</li> <li>3. Mine Action</li> <li>4. Briefing on Cash</li> <li>5. Update on 9th Brussels Conference</li> <li>6. Update on VASyR 2025</li> <li>7. Update on LHF</li> <li>8. <a href="#">AoB</a></li> </ol>		

### 1. Opening Remarks

Dr. Ola Boutros, LRP General Supervisor (MoSA)  
 Kristin Arthur, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)  
 Marianne El Haibe, Inter-Agency Coordinator - A.I. (UNDP)  
 Eyram Dzitrie, Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA)

In their opening remarks, the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Co-Chairs welcomed the participants and presented the agenda.

Dr. Ola Boutros expressed appreciation for the sector leads' efforts in adjusting their budgets given the updated number of Syrians. She highlighted the establishment of a ministerial committee focused on the refugee matters and provided an update that the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) has already reached 50,000 households through its efforts to integrate displaced Lebanese into social protection programs, noting that a new circular for the second phase will be issued soon. Dr. Ola emphasized the need for coordination with MoSA on all cash and other programs to ensure consistency with the Aman Program's payment mechanism and adherence to vulnerability criteria. She also noted the ongoing fragility in south and north Lebanon, with high numbers of new arrivals, and shared that the government is working with Syrian authorities to close illegal crossings and secure the borders. Dr. Ola reaffirmed the importance of the close cooperation with partners, which has been key in managing the crisis, and mentioned that government entities are in the process of nominating or reassigning sector focal points, with some already completed.

Kristin Arthur reminded participants that an Ad-Hoc ISCG Meeting is scheduled for 16 April 2025 to discussed return planning and preparedness planning. She also noted that the lesson learnt national and sub-national reports will be shared for final review and red-line feedback. A government-level lessons learned exercise is also being conducted at the subnational level, coordinated with the respective governors who will circulate the invitations. There was a discussion about whether sectors should be involved or not, with

some colleagues suggesting that including sector representatives could enrich the feedback process. However, it was agreed that this would be determined by the subnational ISCG co-chairs based on invitation from the Governors.

### Action Points:

1. Inter-Sector Co-Chairs to hold meeting with sectors on updating the Inter-Sector Workplan.
2. Inter-Sector Co-Chairs to update on LRP finalization steps and timeline.
3. OCHA to share Funding Shortages Survey results.
4. Protection Sector to present on Protection Risk Analysis in upcoming ISCG meeting and to provide an action plan on way forward.

## 2. New Arrivals Response: North & Akkar Governorates

Maeve Murphy, Head of North Office (UNHCR)

Maeve Murphy provided an update and overview of the new arrivals response in the North and Akkar Governorates:

- As of 2 April 2025, 29,022 Individuals/6,196 Families have arrived to the North and Akkar governorates (see map on slide 7 of the presentation [here](#)).
- **Shelter and Site Coordination:** There are 25 Collective Shelters (CSs) with capacity gaps in Akkar and Jabal Mohsen, low shelter sector intervention capacity, and concerns about overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, and structural damage.
- **WaSH and Solid Waste Management:** Water access is limited in the Sahel region, with Solidarités International providing water trucking and a lack of hygiene kits, while UNDP is supporting solid waste management in Akkar, though no partner is identified for ongoing support.
- **Basic Assistance:** Ongoing distribution of Core Relief Items (CRIs) like blankets and mattresses is being carried out by multiple agencies in Akkar and North Governorates, but there is a lack of contingency stock for newcomers.
- **Food Security & Agriculture:** Hot meals and ready-to-eat food parcels are being provided during Ramadan and will continue until May, but there are concerns about the sustainability of this support beyond that period.
- **Nutrition:** Nutrition capacity mapping is underway, and discussions with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) for breast milk substitutes are ongoing, but coverage is limited, and breast milk substitutes are not currently available.
- **Health:** Primary and secondary health services, including mobile medical teams and vaccinations, are being provided, but there are gaps in MHPSS services, life-saving SHC for those unknown to UNHCR, and support for illegal arrivals.
- **General Protection:** Protection monitoring is being conducted to assess risks and vulnerabilities, with emergency protection case management and counseling services provided, but challenges remain in securing a waiver for Lebanese families' visa fees.
- **Child Protection:** Safe identification and referral services for vulnerable children, child protection case management, and Psychological First Aid (PFA) sessions are available, but there are gaps in infrastructure for confidential case management, a lack of recreational activities, and a need for more PFA support.
- **GBV:** Safe identification and referral, GBV case management, and Psychosocial Support (PSS) sessions are provided, but there are gaps in infrastructure for confidential case management, limited capacity for mental health referrals, and a need for more PSS support.
- **Education:** Provision of PSS, recreational activities, and learning kits to new arrivals in existing centers.

Sectors expressed concerns that their LRP planning did not account for recent influxes, and that it is challenging to repurpose funds due to the highly prioritized nature of existing strategies.

### 3. Tensions Overview

Nisreen Jaafar, Conflict Analysis & Mainstreaming Officer (UNDP)

Nisreen Jaafar presented an overview of the current tensions landscape:

- A significant influx of around 15,000 displaced individuals into Akkar has led to increased competition for aid, with reluctance to share data due to fears of deportation, hindering access to vulnerable populations.
- Tensions within local communities and authorities have grown, as new arrivals strain infrastructure and services, exacerbated by political and sectarian divisions (Sunni vs. Alawite).
- Security concerns have risen, including allegations of pro-Assad affiliations, leading to arrests and sectarian incidents, such as the Jabal Mohsen assault, which was mis-attributed.
- Misinformation and disinformation, especially related to the presence of pro-Assad supporters and illegal cross-border activities, are further fueling tensions and polarization in the region.
- Amidst highly volatile environment in the North and Akkar, perceptions of restrictions on foreigners making the area safe were highest in Akkar.
- Inter-communal relations are strained by competition over access to services and economic competition further exacerbated by recent waves of displacement.
- Increased displacement will continue to strain local infrastructure and resources increasing the risks of service-related tensions including vertical tensions with local authorities.
- Deepening political strife impacted by shifting national dynamics and volatile geopolitical changes at the regional level.
- Concerns over unmet humanitarian needs amid challenging funding landscape in the region and globally.

### 4. Mine Action

Stephen Robinson, Mine Action Policy Advisor (UNDP)

Stephen Robinson presented on mine action in Lebanon:

- The five pillars of mine action include: Clearance, Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE), Stockpile Destruction, Victim's Assistance, and Advocacy.
- In Lebanon, mine action is positioned as a risk management support tool to enable safer humanitarian operations. The priority areas include clearance and EORE.
- Mine action should be viewed as a risk management tool to support safe humanitarian operations, helping partners reduce risks to staff, beneficiaries, and projects.
- The modern land release process includes the following noting that the majority of land is released through the survey process, rather than full clearance, and that clearance shouldn't be perceived as a person or machine checking every inch of land.
  - Non-technical survey: A technical but safe assessment conducted without entering hazardous areas to determine if contamination is likely.
  - Technical survey: Initiated when there is suspicion of contamination; teams enter suspected areas using protective equipment.
  - Clearance: Full clearance operations are carried out if hazardous items are confirmed.

- In Lebanon, the Lebanese Mine Action Centre (LMAC) is the national authority mandated by the Government of Lebanon (GoL) to coordinate and oversee all mine action activities. LMAC is a military body led by a Brigadier General and staffed by Lebanese Armed Forces personnel. It is the only entity authorized to task NGOs or military teams to conduct mine action work.
- All mine action actors must be accredited by LMAC, which evaluates their procedures, staff qualifications, training, and equipment. LMAC also performs regular quality assurance to ensure high standards are maintained. While national contamination mapping is ongoing and expected to be completed in six months, sub-national data can be shared upon request.
- The current capacity in Lebanon includes four international NGOs, three national NGOs, and four teams from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). UNIFIL also operates mine action teams, although these are currently only supporting the mission itself.
- The mine action sector offers a range of support to partners, including:
  - EORE sessions for humanitarian staff, partners, and affected communities.
  - Risk assessments and tailored mitigation advice.
  - Area mapping to identify low, medium, or high-risk zones.
  - Clearance of areas identified as contaminated or high priority.
- Sectors and partners are encouraged to view mine action as a risk support mechanism and to integrate risk information into their operational planning.

Stephen has been asked to share a map of lands cleaned from mines.

## 5. Briefing on Cash

[Diana Tonea, Senior Inter-Agency Cash Advisor \(WFP\)](#)

Diana Tonea provided a briefing on cash mapping:

- The recent presentation of the cash mapping to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) received overall positive feedback, with several members recognizing the value of the exercise.
- The extended Cash Working Group (CWG) meeting held with MoSA, the Lebanon Donor Cash Forum (LDCF), and other interested cash actors served as an important platform to share key findings and reinforce coordination.
- Looking ahead, the CWG will contribute to the upcoming Donor Cash Forum (DCF) meeting scheduled for 24 April 2025. The presentation will be co-developed with inputs from sector coordinators, ISCG members, and CWG participants to ensure collective ownership and relevance.
- Medium-term priorities identified by the CWG include the development of common messages on risks and mitigation measures to be presented to the HCT, outlining next steps on the cash mapping exercise, finalizing a common cash framework, and updating emergency Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) guidelines.
- Additionally, the CWG is engaging in discussions on the future of the MoSA registration system to ensure it serves as a unique entry point and that sectors and stakeholders remain informed and consulted when needed.
- On the cash mapping exercise, the main challenges include under-reporting across all reporting tools, lack of harmonization of cash indicators, inconsistent terminology across sectors, as well as incomplete reporting of the total USD disbursed, which in some cases required manual calculations by agencies.
- There is a need to improve understanding of how MPCA and multisectoral cash assistance are reported under different sectors. A key technical gap is the absence of a unified methodology to calculate the unique number of households or individuals benefiting from MPCA and Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) across sectors.

Additionally, there is currently no consolidated or single source of information for tracking Social Protection-related cash assistance.

- As next steps, the Information Management Working Group (IMWG) will circulate an email to map existing cash indicators and reporting practices. Both the CWG and IMWG will work closely with sectors throughout 2025 to harmonize reporting through ActivityInfo and develop a dashboard to support ongoing monitoring. The CWG will also explore the potential to introduce MPCA reporting within ActivityInfo, in addition to existing sectoral cash reporting.
- Regarding the DCF meeting, the CWG emphasized the intention to co-create the presentation with active participation from the sectors, ISCG, and CWG members. The agenda will include updates on cash coordination and the cash mapping exercise, a summary of the outcomes of the lessons learned exercise from the September emergency response, an analysis of risks associated with both cash and in-kind programming, and a joint advocacy component with the DCF and LDCF.

### Action Points:

5. Sector Coordinators to share any feedback they received following the HCT discussion on the cash mapping presentation with Diana Tonea at [diana.tonea@wfp.org](mailto:diana.tonea@wfp.org) and the CWG Co-Chairs Julien Morel at [MORELJ@unhcr.org](mailto:MORELJ@unhcr.org) and Luigi Peter Ragno at [lragno@unicef.org](mailto:lragno@unicef.org) to ensure all perspectives are considered ahead of the upcoming CWG meeting with the DCF. This includes additional inputs or recommendations on the presentation and the cash mapping exercise itself—particularly any feedback received from donors.

## 6. Update on 9th Brussels Conference

Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR)

Stephanie Laba presented initial takeaways and key messages from the 9<sup>th</sup> Brussels Conference on ‘Standing with Syria: Meeting the Needs for a Successful Transition’:

- For the first time, Syria's transitional government participated in the conference, signaling a new phase of engagement with the international community aimed at maintaining continuous dialogue with Syrian communities and stakeholders.
- The EU will support a civil society event later this year in Damascus, and the Day of Dialogue—which traditionally precedes the main conference—is now scheduled to take place in Damascus later this summer.
- The Ministerial Conference and the pledging segment have concluded. During the event, a strong emphasis was placed on securing international commitment to both immediate humanitarian assistance and long-term recovery efforts in Syria.
- Regarding Lebanon, the overall message remained consistent, with the government calling for continued support from the international community for both humanitarian needs and longer-term recovery.
- Lebanon's Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasized that the prolonged presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon no longer has a legal basis, citing improvements in the situation in Syria. He called on the international community to lift sanctions to enable Syria's reconstruction and support the transition from early recovery to return.
- The Minister also referenced recent arrivals from the Syrian coast and stressed that Lebanon cannot accommodate a new influx of refugees, urging instead for a diplomatic and comprehensive solution. He concluded that humanitarian assistance alone is insufficient for ensuring refugee returns and called for decisive political action to secure sustainable and lasting solutions for both Lebanon and Syria.

- The total pledges announced during the conference for 2025 amount to EUR 5.8 billion, including both grants and loans. This represents a significant decrease of approximately EUR 1.7 billion (or 22.67%) compared to last year, signaling that humanitarian and recovery funding will remain constrained in 2025 and likely beyond.
- The EU and its Member States collectively contributed 80% of the total pledges.
- For more information, please refer to the email sent by [lebbeia@unhcr.org](mailto:lebbeia@unhcr.org) titled *Initial Readout: Ninth Brussels Conference on 'Standing with Syria: Meeting the Needs for a Successful Transition'*.

## 7. Update on VASyR 2025

Raffi Kouzoujian, Assistant Information Management Officer (UNHCR)

Raffi Kouzoujian presented the projected schedule and milestones for the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) from March to July 2025. Please refer to slide 47 [here](#) for the timeline.

## 8. Update on LHF

Yendi Ghossein, Deputy Fund Manager (LHF)

Yendi Ghossein provided an update on the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF):

- The contingency budget line is available in 30-33 grants, but only 6 or 7 partners have activated it. LHF will send an email early next week to partners who have not activated the contingency budget line, encouraging them to do so. This activation will allow support for newcomers or any emergencies outside the initial scope of projects.
- Partners are also advised that if a project does not include a specific sector (e.g., WASH), they can activate the contingency budget line to cover that sector in a different location.
- For 2025, the LHF will allocate up to \$25 million for the first standard allocation. The allocation process will be fully competitive, contrasting with the reserve allocation in the last quarter of 2024, which was non-competitive and amounted to \$40 million.
- This year's allocation will be designed in three pillars to focus on maximizing impact and avoiding fund diffusion.
  - Pillar 1: Focuses on sustaining critical life-saving interventions in conflict-affected areas to address survival needs.
  - Pillar 2: Targets rapid response to new shocks, addressing vulnerabilities and service disruptions.
  - Pillar 3: The flexibility pillar, aimed at strengthening local capacity in humanitarian action and primarily supporting national NGOs. National NGOs are eligible for all three pillars but must justify projects not aligned with the first two pillars. The maximum project amount under this pillar is \$400,000.
- The consultation process for the allocation will begin on Monday, 7 April 2025, and will involve feedback from sectors, core groups, and sub-national levels. A two-week timeframe will be set for consultation at the national and sub-national levels.
- A community consultation will also be conducted to ensure beneficiaries' feedback is incorporated into the allocation. This will mainly pertain to Pillar 1.
- After consultations, data will be consolidated, and sectors will be consulted again for alignment with inter-sectoral priorities before finalizing the allocation strategy.
- The Advisory Board will review the consultation outcome on 7-8 May, with the allocation call expected to be released by 10 May.
- The process aims to rely heavily on sector coordinators and stakeholders to facilitate the consultations, which will occur within a short timeframe.

## **9. AoB**

No points were presented / discussed under AoB.



## Annex 1

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