



Lebanon Update

Support to Displaced Syrians

February 24 - March 02 2012



Figure 1 UNHCR leading a multi-agency meeting in its Beirut Office to coordinate the response to the Syrian displacement in Lebanon. © UNHCR, Carol El Sayed, March 2 2012

Highlights of the week

Numbers

The number of displaced Syrians currently registered with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) in North Lebanon is 7,058 persons. Since the previous week, there has been an increase of 142 newly registered persons, mainly in the Wadi Khaled, Akroom, Bire, Halba, and Old Akkar areas. Of them, 73 arrived in Lebanon since the beginning of the year (32 in January and 41 in February). The others arrived earlier but only came forward to register this week.

Registration resumed in Tripoli this week following a suspension of several weeks by the HRC. As in the Wadi Khaled area it is being conducted jointly by the HRC and UNHCR.

Protection and Security

During the week, 52 wounded Syrians were admitted to hospitals. Also, 3 wounded persons passed away; one while being transported to hospital and the two others during their hospitalization.

Circulation permits have yet to be issued. Many in the north report feeling frustrated by their lack of mobility and

consequent inability to find temporary work.

It was agreed with the HRC that UNHCR will start issuing registration certificates to displaced Syrians in the North, in order to facilitate access to assistance and as a fraud prevention measure.

Assistance in North Lebanon

Distribution

This week, the HRC, UNHCR and its implementing partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) began the monthly distribution of food and non-food items, from which a total of 425 families (2,120 individuals) have thus far benefited.

UNHCR and DRC distributed 3,792 fuel coupons to Syrian displaced and 2,198 coupons to vulnerable Lebanese host families.

In addition, UNICEF contributed hygiene kits and flashlights while Islamic Relief provided diapers.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

UNHCR and DRC hosted opening ceremonies to launch three QIPs, which include the renovation of Aidmon village public library, the rehabilitation of the Al-Almaar public garden and the launch of a cinema club in Alawadh village. The projects were developed in close coordination with the local communities and community leaders, *mukhtars*. The projects aim to provide needed services and activities for both the host and displaced communities.

Education

UNHCR and partners, notably its implementing partner Save the Children Sweden (SCS) identified a new local NGO "Nour El Moustakbal" in Wadi Khaled that agreed to facilitate remedial classes in Amayer public school. A team of outreach workers is registering displaced and Lebanese students in the new remedial classes by visiting public schools neighbouring Amayer public school mainly in Hnaider, Kneise, Majdal and Kalkha.

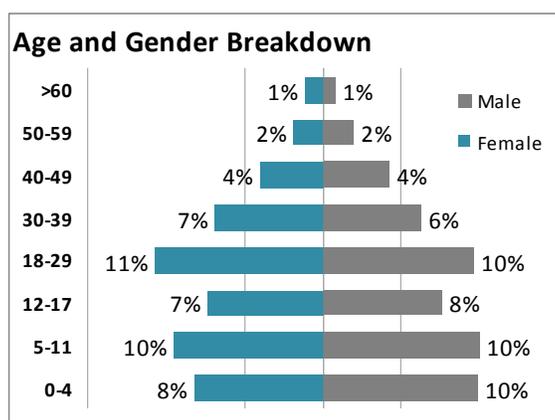
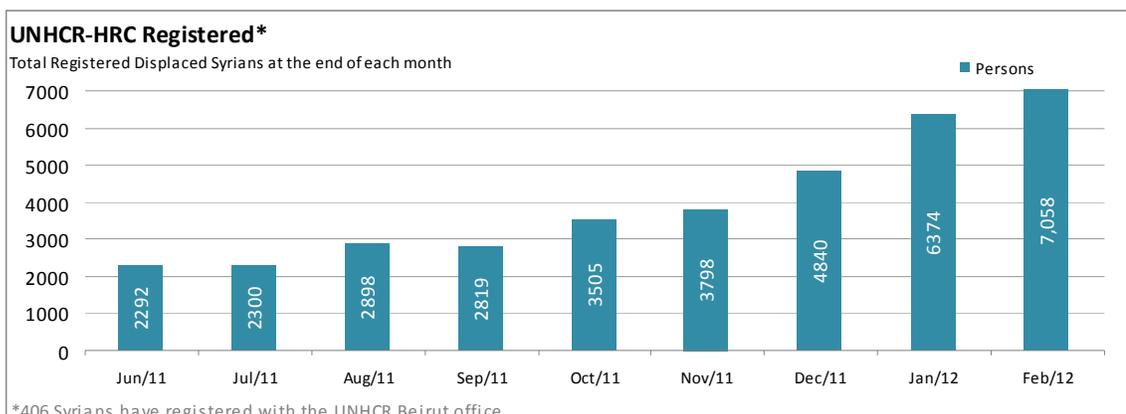
Assistance in other parts of Lebanon

The UNHCR/DRC planned distribution this week of heating fuel, food kits and NFI to the Bekaa had to be postponed because of heavy snow falls and roads closure. The distribution has been rescheduled for next week.

The bi-weekly inter-agency coordination meeting took place in Beirut this Friday, with a specific focus on relief assistance to displaced Syrians in eastern Lebanon.

In light of ongoing needs, UNHCR began discussions with partners for an inter-agency Regional Response Plan (RRP) to look comprehensively at the humanitarian needs of Syrian displaced through 2012. This process will be similar to the RRP for Iraqis which UNHCR has for some years been coordinating with UN, NGO and government partners.

Situational Overview



Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 6,000 Syrians into North Lebanon. Many subsequently returned to Syria, while others relocated within Lebanon. Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC have registered and assisted over 11,000 persons in the north.

Currently there are 7,058 persons (1,366 households) registered in the north. Of this number, one third was registered in the past two months. Local mayors and NGOs have played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

There are also concentrations of displaced Syrians residing in other parts of Lebanon. UNHCR's latest estimates with partners

indicate that there are between 3,000-4,500 persons in need in the eastern Lebanon and south of Beirut.

Syrians who have entered Lebanon reside mostly with host families in difficult circumstances. In North Lebanon, some 200 live in collective centres that have been renovated by UNHCR and partners.

Many individuals and families have been deeply affected by the events that caused them to leave and are reluctant to return home until the situation stabilizes.

Protection

The vast majority of Syrians registered with the HRC and UNHCR have come from Tal Kalakh and Homs. They express fear

and anxiety about returning and most do not feel that the situation is safe enough for them to do so yet.

The majority of those who have arrived in recent months, have crossed at official border crossings expressing fear of going through the unofficial ones. They also express concern of the reported presence of land mines on the Syrian side of the border.

UNHCR maintains regular contact with the Lebanese authorities and civil society representatives to follow-up on the security situation of the displaced populations.

Since the outset last April, the Lebanese government has taken a humanitarian approach allowing displaced Syrians to enter Lebanon. There have been very few cases of arrests of illegal entry/stay in the past many months. In all cases, persons were released upon UNHCR's interventions.

Circulation permits have not been issued by the authorities to those who crossed at unofficial border crossings. This has limited their movement within Lebanon.

Records reveal that 233 wounded Syrians have been treated in various hospitals in Lebanon since the beginning of the influx. Expenses related to their treatment are covered by the Lebanese authorities through the HRC. Their treatment and needs are followed-up by UNHCR and partners.

Assistance

Outside of North Lebanon where the HRC is not operational, refugees are assisted by local NGOs, municipalities, and other partners. UNHCR is contributing to and expanding its efforts to meet humanitarian needs of these communities.

In North Lebanon, a very solid coordinated response and positive working relations with the government's HRC and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) were established at the outset to the benefit of the refugees and hosting communities. These partnerships continue and together with other UN and NGO partners, the needs of refugees and affected communities are being holistically addressed. They include the following:

- Protection interventions to ensure safety, physical integrity and non-refoulement;
- Assistance to meet basic needs;
- Education and remedial classes;
- Provision of medical and psycho-social care.

A common database is in use by the HRC and UNHCR, and referral mechanisms were established to enable the displaced persons to access assistance through specialized partners. Identification and registration occurs on a daily basis by outreach teams. UNHCR and the HRC verify the numbers during the monthly distribution of food/non-food items. Persons found no longer to be in the area are de-registered. Many of these are known to have returned to Syria

Community Services Outreach workers from the MoSA and DRC continue to visit the displaced Syrians at homes and in schools in Wadi Khaled, Tall Bire, and Tripoli in order to counsel them, assess their needs, and refer newcomers to UNHCR and HRC for registration. A comprehensive referral mechanism to respond to survivors of violence has been established among key stakeholders for identified cases.

Shelter Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. Just over 200 persons are accommodated in three (abandoned) schools: Al-Rama, Al-Ibra and Al-Mouanseh schools. The schools were initially not well-equipped (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) to receive large numbers of people but have improved and are regularly monitored. The hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque has also been rehabilitated to host displaced families should there be a need in the future.

UNHCR and the HRC initiated the renovation of Al Rama, Al Mouanseh, and Kashlak schools, and the hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque, while the renovation of the Al Ibra school was undertaken by the Al-Bashaer Islamic Association.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) together with partner organizations and outreach workers identified host family residences in pressing need of improvement in preparation for the winter. Through this assessment, NRC provided 90 families with coupons that enabled them to renovate their homes, allowing for better living conditions for both the local and displaced communities. NRC is currently in the process of planning for the potential continuation of this project.

Distribution (Food/ NFI) UNHCR along with the HRC, DRC, Caritas Migrant Centre, World Vision, and UNICEF distribute food and non-food items to the displaced on a monthly basis. UNHCR continues to provide food and non-food items to newly registered families who were not on the UNHCR-HRC database during the last distribution.

Mattresses	4,589
Blankets	4,857
Food kits	5,949
Fuel coupons of 20 liters	21,201
Diapers	886
Baby milk	1,317
Baby kits	424
Hygiene kits	3,960
Women's underwear	714
Tuition fees	465
Books	465
Stationary	596
Uniforms	465
Family kit (kitchen utensils)	48
Clothes coupons of 75,000 LBP	1,113

Clothes by UNICEF	52
Toys by UNICEF	92
Educational kits for children in remedial classes	23

Education A total of 525 displaced children have enrolled into public schools. However, the school enrolment rate in North Lebanon is 53% at the primary school level (6-11 year old) and as little as 9% at secondary school level (12-17 year old). Reasons vary between the different age groups.

The main reasons for low retention among primary school-aged children include: late registration, denial of access by some school administrators, unease over their circumstances and and anxiety concerning of the different curriculum. Very low secondary school enrolment is largely due to cultural practices and specifically the expectation that boys from from the age of 13 years are expected to work and girls from that age are encouraged to get married.

UNHCR is seeking to improve the school enrolment rate in 2012 through provision of awareness sessions and remedial classes. A field working group meeting with the key actors is set for 8 March in North Lebanon to address these issues.

Health UNHCR, HRC and UNHCR's implementing partner International Medical Corps (IMC) have established a referral system so that registered displaced Syrians have access to health care services through the most specialized partner.

In the Bekaa, in the absence of HRC's involvement, UNHCR with its implementing partner IMC will contribute to covering health care services for displaced Syrians. Referral hospitals are being identified.

Primary Healthcare

Primary Health Care Centres, Social Development Centres of the MoSA, and a few NGO-run health care centres in the region are providing primary health care and medication to the displaced. UNHCR covers the full cost for doctor consultations and diagnostic tests for women and children and up to 85% of diagnostic tests for all displaced persons. Since September 2011, there have been 986 patients who have received primary health care from different health centres and mobile medical units.

Secondary Healthcare

The HRC covers the cost of secondary and tertiary health care through local hospitals in the north. UNHCR provides additional support where needed. The HRC and IMC reached agreement with five hospitals for discounted rates in the provision of necessary health care. Since September 2011, there have been 455 hospital admissions, mostly covered by HRC.

WHO and UNHCR are liaising with MoPH, IMC, MSF and other partners to increase the provision of chronic medications and to improve the health referral mechanism and health information at the field level.

Mental Healthcare

Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) started the implementation of a mental health project jointly with the Makassed Public Health Centre (PHC). A psychologist and a psychiatrist have been deployed to Makassed's centre to provide mental health counselling to all Wadi Khaled residents, including the displaced.

Capacity Building

UNCHR has invested in strengthening the capacities of governments and local partners through:

- Regular coordination meetings and joint plans of action;
- Technical and material support to the HRC in regards to registration, data collection and verification;
- Training and guidance to HRC, MoSA, partners, medical, educational and social service providers in a wide range of areas including:
 - protection of refugees and internally displaced persons;
 - effective registration and monitoring practices;
 - psychological first aid and mental health;
 - remedial class management and positive discipline;
 - computer skills for local health service providers.
- Quick Impact Projects such as public gardens, public library and a cine club;
- Establishment of medical referral mechanisms and training for the systematic entry of data in the health referral system.