



Lebanon Update

Support to Displaced
Syrians



A UNHCR field Officer visits an injured displaced Syrian in a local hospital in Qobayat © UNHCR – Dalia Khamissy – October 2011.

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.

Currently over 26,000 displaced Syrians are being assisted throughout the country.

Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC have registered and assisted over 16,000 persons in the north.

Currently there are 13,203 registered people in the North. In addition, there are 2,000 to 3,000 people who are soon to be registered in Tripoli and surrounding areas. Local mayors and NGOs have played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

UNHCR is in the process of registering displaced Syrians in Eastern Lebanon. The registration exercise started in Aarsal where 1,415 people have been registered. Some 7,500 will soon be registered in different UNHCR registration centers in the area.

There are more limited concentrations of displaced people known to be residing in Beirut and the surrounding areas, some

848 of whom have been registered by UNHCR.

Syrians who have entered Lebanon reside mostly with host families in difficult circumstances. In north Lebanon, some 300 people 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. The majority of displaced Syrians in the Bekaa region have come from Baba Amr in Homs and Al Qusayr, south of Homs.

The majority of those who have arrived in recent months to north Lebanon have crossed at official border crossings expressing fear of going through the unofficial ones. They also express concern of the reported presence of landmines on the Syrian side of the border. In the Bekaa, the majority of displaced people enter legally through the Masnaa border crossing while some enter through illegal borders in north Lebanon.

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

From 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 for illegal entry/stay in the past many months. In all cases, people were released upon UNHCR's interventions.

The movement of Syrians who entered Lebanon at unofficial border crossings in the North is still limited within north Lebanon.

Records reveal that over 400 wounded Syrians have been treated in various hospitals in Lebanon since September. Expenses related to their treatment are covered by the Lebanese authorities through the HRC in north Lebanon or by UNHCR and IMC in the Bekaa. Their treatment and needs are followed-up by UNHCR and partners.

Assistance

Outside of north Lebanon where the HRC is not operational, UNHCR is working to assist displaced Syrians through local municipalities, NGOs, and other partners. The Office is now expanding its efforts to

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 300 people are accommodated in three (abandoned) schools in the North -Al-Rama, Al-Ibra and Al-Mouanseh schools- and few families are currently accommodated in a mosque in Aarsal. The three above-mentioned schools were initially not well-equipped (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) to receive large numbers of people but have improved and are regularly monitored. Basic renovation of a fourth abandoned school

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 displaced and hosting communities. These partnerships continue and together with other UN and NGO partners, the needs of Syrians 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 people to access assistance through specialized partners in the North. 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. People found no longer to be in the area are de-registered. Many of these are known to have returned to Syria. UNHCR is currently expanding its operation in order to reach out to more displaced families in Tripoli.

in Halba, the Freidis school, has been completed and is ready to receive new families. An additional shelter in Mineh is under renovation. 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 both north Lebanon and the Bekaa. Through this assessment, NRC provided over 105 families with coupons that enabled them to renovate their homes in the North, allowing for better living conditions for both the local and displaced communities. An additional 95 host families in the Bekaa are being provided with coupons.

Distribution (Food/ NFI) In north Lebanon, UNHCR along with the HRC, DRC, Caritas Migrant Centre, Islamic Relief, 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. Distribution in the Bekaa is facilitated with UNHCR partners through local actors.

Education A total of 552 displaced children are currently enrolled in public schools in the North. However, the school enrollment rate in Lebanon is 25% at the primary school level (6-11 year old) and as little as 3.6% at secondary school level (12-17 year old). Reasons vary between the different age groups.

The main reason for low school enrollment rate among primary and secondary school-aged children is Syrian students' late arrival into the school year. Other reasons include: late registration, denial of access by some school administrators, unease over their circumstances 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 the age of 13 years are expected to work and girls from that age are encouraged to get married.

In the Bekaa, displaced Syrian children are not enrolled in schools due to their late arrival to Lebanon in the school year. Some 400 children however have been registered for remedial classes.

UNHCR is seeking to improve the school enrolment rate and attendance to remedial classes through provision of awareness sessions, remedial classes and accelerated summer learning programmes. UNHCR is also coordinating with other specialized actors such as Save the Children, UNESCO, UNICEF, Terre des Hommes and others to better address this issue. UNICEF and partners are launching a detailed education assessment with a view to expand education programmes in the Bekaa.

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

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 in North Lebanon. 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 people. Since September 2011, there have been 1,646 patients who have received primary health care from different health centres and mobile medical units in north Lebanon. IMC is monitoring vaccination records for refugee children.

In the Bekaa, vaccination is being provided to all children in need including displaced Syrian children through national channels. IMC has signed agreements with primary health care centers in Taanayel, Baalbeck and Aarsal to provide doctor consultations, medications including chronic, and diagnostic services to all displaced Syrians. This will expand during the coming period. Primary health care is covered by Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in Saadnayel and Amel Association in Aarsal.

Mental Health Care

UNHCR/IMC is integrating primary mental health services at 8 primary health care centres in north Lebanon. MSF are providing specialized mental health care needs through 3 health facilities.

In the Bekaa, MSF Switzerland started a mental health programme. In the absence of HRC's involvement, UNHCR with its implementing partner IMC will contribute to covering health care services for displaced Syrians.

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 agreements with five hospitals for discounted rates in the provision of necessary health care. Since September 2011, there have been 963 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.

In the Bekaa, UNHCR is covering the cost of hospital care at three local hospitals through its implementing partner IMC. So far, 157 cases have been covered, mostly deliveries. The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) is covering the hospitalization costs of all wounded displaced pending their transfer to north Lebanon for complete treatment. Other cases in need of hospitalization will continue to be covered by the HRC if transferred to north Lebanon.

Capacity Building

UNHCR 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.