

Coordination Meeting – Syrian Situation

17 August 2012

UNHCR, Ramlet El Baida, Beirut

Summary of discussions and action points

Situation Update

General Update:

- Challenge: Shelter strategy and relocating families living in operational schools
- Refining Contingency Plan

North Lebanon:

- Centralized registration began in Tripoli
- Flow of new arrivals remains stable with approximately 500 people/week (60-80 families)
- Centralized distribution expanded to Bire and Wadi Khaled
- WFP began distributing food vouchers in all of the North except Tripoli; assessing to expand the program in Tripoli
 - From WFP: July distributions were delayed. North follows same process as in the Bekaa and Tripoli is hoping to move to food vouchers for September cycle
- Regular reports of shelling from Syria into border villages (mainly Akkar and Wadi Khaled)
- Increased tensions due to recent random abductions of Syrian nationals
- For many months, assistance has been provided to people pending registration, but there needs to be a collaborative effort to close the gap.
 - ECHO-DRC: There are 1,800 households to whom they will provide assistance for new arrivals pending registration. WFP: also willing to support. Need to systemize and meet with people who are interested in helping to have a clear plan on how to address new arrivals. Perhaps have a few key actors in each region who can organize the response and facilitate a conversation on who will do what, etc.

Bekaa:

- Centralized registration taking place in central Bekaa throughout August
- UNHCR and partners meeting with the MoEHE to identify schools to enroll Syrian children while 'back to school' initiatives take place
- Shelter options remain a pressing concern
- UNHCR and partners are designing a cash-for-shelter program to commence in the coming weeks
- Instructed by Security to stop work due to the news of kidnappings of Syrian nationals (didn't want to bring large groups of Syrians to one place, such as in registration or distribution activities)- many would also have to travel through road blocks, etc. Registration will hopefully continue this week. Another activity affected was a meeting with school directors in the area to further preparations for enrolling children in schools, this is postponed until next week.
- Shelter: had a program in coordination with MoSA to identify medium to long-term shelter in the area. This activity shifted priorities in the last few weeks due to the increasing numbers of active schools hosting refugees. Before, abandoned schools were an option to increase the means of shelter capacity but now gears are shifting toward relocating these people in active schools. Identifying abandoned schools will not be the most suitable option as it takes weeks

and requires the necessary approvals from appropriate ministries.

Shelter Strategy

- An expected 1/3 of refugees will be in direct need of shelter assistance
- NRC/DRC working on identifying unfinished buildings/homes/apartments that can be rehabilitated. Also the option of family boxes (pre-fab, no toilet so needs to be connected to a shelter with facilities), cash for shelter is ready.
- Main trend is that there will be more people than there is available shelter.
- Some Syrians have financial means to secure accommodation
- Hospitality of host families will remain, especially in locations where family links with refugees are present. Host family capacity is stretched and needs to be supported
- Limited number of available collective buildings
- 40,000 people initially targeted- Where do we go first? Winterization plan? There will still be 60% not targeted because they don't need help.

Cash for shelter allows for the ability to respond to current needs, to help people who are renting and cannot any longer, to sustain the current shelter capacity and to take care of new arrivals.

- Any input/comments/ suggestions on how to improve shelter plan is welcomed
- Huge request for cooking gas by refugees. In winter, refugees use warming fuel to cook that is why there is more of a request now in the summer for cooking gas. Field teams can perhaps have a small study of areas and seasons when cooking gas is needed?

Palestinians, Host Families, Lebanese Returnees

Palestinians:

- 3,000 Palestinians have come to UNRWA however there are larger statistics, such as 600 families all over Lebanon. UNRWA says largest group is coming into Saida, others say more are in Tyre. 60% are staying in camps.
- Assistance is primary health care, also looking at hospitalization referrals on a case-by-case basis.
- Working on education for those who want to register with schools, currently reviewing how this will work (problem of school curriculum being different in Lebanon from Syria)
- UNRWA is unable at the moment to directly provide distribution assistance but are working through local NGOs with UNRWA taking a coordinating role
- Palestinians are given a 7-day visa when crossing the border and can renew for one month, however this is too expensive for many. UNRWA can provide advice on the process for applying for visa extensions. UNRWA also meets regularly with Security General.
- Any Syrian refugee who ends up in a Palestinian camp can be referred to UNHCR. However, most of those going to Tyre are going to camps because they prefer not to register.

Support to Host Families:

- Taking care of host families is in a way taking care of refugees
- Host families in the North are in a more dire situation than in the Bekaa, most are not asking for direct assistance. Also in the North most are relatives of refugees so they are hosting for a longer time than in the Bekaa.
- WFP: tensions can arise as situation becomes more protracted. One key lesson learned from Libyan refugees in Tunisia last year was how relationships soured. Maybe do something at a community level, such as Quick Impact Projects?

Lebanese Returnees:

- Targeted several for profiling, number is increasing, report to be shared.
- 160 families on the pipeline. Currently focusing on livelihood, shelter support and NFIs (hygiene kits). Will plan interventions according to specific needs.
- Lebanese returnees are becoming more and more prominent, and there are gaps. Next RRP needs to make sure that this group is recognized and addressed. Perhaps Government can take lead on addressing this population, with one or two agencies assisting?

-Please note the difference between IDPs, Returnees, etc. These are Lebanese Nationals. Assistance based on interim humanitarian involvement until the appropriate actor takes responsibility.

-What is the strategy for assisting them? Refugee strategy is based off return to home country, but Lebanese will presumably not return so how do we get them into a position where they can integrate? (vocational training?) What will the frequency and level of assistance be?

Action Points

-At UNHCR field coordination level: design a strategy for the provision of assistance to new arrivals pending registration

-At UNHCR field coordination level: design a strategy for the provision of cooking gas (scope and target beneficiaries)

-If there are any organizations or NGOs with the capacity of assisting Palestine refugees with NFI, food assistance, beds, etc., please let UNRWA know

-Anyone interested in assisting with Palestine refugees, please contact Catherine at UNRWA c.richards@unrwa.org

-Please let Daunia from UNHCR know if you want to correct or add anything to the web portal, pavone@unhcr.org

Next Meeting: August 31, 2011 - 10h00, UNHCR, Ramlet El Baida, Beirut