

UN Inter-Agency Response for Syrian Refugees

Beirut, December 14-21, 2012



Highlights of the week

- Over 4,000 Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR this week;
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres and EU Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva visited Syrian refugees in the Bekaa, as well as held meetings with Government officials and NGO partners to discuss priorities and the humanitarian response for Syrian refugees;
- UNHCR and partners launched the fourth Regional Response Plan (RRP), appealing for \$1 billion USD to assist a projected 1 million Syrian refugees in the region by June 2013. From this appeal, \$267 million USD has been requested for Lebanon;
- Over 40,000 (8,000 families) people received winterization items, as well as World Food Programme (WFP) food vouchers, food parcels for newly arrived families, hygiene and baby kits this week. The total number of relief items distributed to date is now 580,000;
- WFP commenced distribution of food vouchers to registered refugees in Tyre, Sidon and Nabatiyeh through ACF;
- Two new apartment buildings were identified in the Bekaa for collective shelters, while nine others are currently being renovated;
- The Cash for Rent plan provided over 800 people (160 families) with rent assistance this week.



Donors



Funding is also received in private donations from the following countries: China, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, and Spain.

¹ EU funding is received from DEVCO and ECHO.

Registration and New Arrivals

Over 164,000 Syrian refugees receive protection and assistance from the Government of Lebanon, UN and NGO partners. Of this number, some 122,000 have been registered by UNHCR and 42,000 are scheduled to be registered.

Through registration centers in Tripoli, Beirut, the Bekaa and south Lebanon, UNHCR registers approximately 1,500 refugees daily.

The Al Marj municipality in the Bekaa opened a transit reception centre this week to assist unregistered, new arrivals in need of assistance. The initiative is funded by Saudi Islamic Relief, to shelter newly arrived families until a more permanent accommodation can be found. So far, eight families are residing in the centre.

The majority of refugees still arrive from Homs, Aleppo and Damascus. Current distribution of the registered population is as follows:

North Lebanon: 62,797
Bekaa: 48,118
Beirut and South: 11,451

Protection

This week, UNHCR and partners launched the fourth Regional Response Plan (RRP), appealing for \$1 billion USD to assist a projected 1 million Syrian refugees in the region by June 2013. From this appeal, \$267 million USD has been requested for Lebanon. The plan aims at redoubling efforts to protect the increasing number of Syrian and Palestinian refugees, with a large emphasis on community outreach to those living in urban environments. It prioritizes meeting the most basic and urgent needs and also includes assistance for host communities and capacity building for national institutions engaged in the response. The plan is consistent with the recent launch of the Government's response plan launched just two weeks early and which was done in close cooperation with UNHCR.

An estimated 3,000 Palestinians arrived to the Bekaa this week as a result of violence in the Yarmouk refugee camp near Damascus. UNWRA is addressing the needs of these new arrivals with assistance from UNHCR and both agencies are working closely together on monitoring new arrivals.

New arrivals of Syrian refugees continue to come from Damascus, Homs and Aleppo as a result of insecurity in those areas, destruction of their homes and reported threats. While the majority of refugees are entering Lebanon via official border crossings, some still resort to unofficial crossings mainly due to a fear of official crossing points on the Syrian side or due to unsafe roads leading from Homs to the Masnaa border crossing.

Security

Throughout Lebanon, the security situation remained peaceful this week. The areas of Boqaiaa, Al Noura and Al Bebiyyeh were calm following shelling and clashes on both sides of the border between gunmen and Syrian forces last week. No Syrian families living in these areas have expressed a desire to relocate.

Relatives of the Lebanese victims of the Tal Kalakh ambush blocked the Abu Ali roundabout in Tripoli, urging for the release of the victims' bodies. This did not affect UNHCR's activities this week and the situation resumed to normal today.

Distribution

Over 40,000 Syrian refugees benefitted from distribution throughout Lebanon this week due to the collective efforts of UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), World Vision (WVI), UNICEF, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Sheild and Caritas Migrant Center (CLMC). Some 70,000 winterization items were distributed as well as food vouchers, food parcels for newly arrived families, hygiene and baby kits. This brings the total number of relief items distributed to date to over 580,000.

UNHCR, WFP, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), WVI and CLMC continue to operate in the North and Bekaa, while CLMC and Sheild distribute to families in Sidon, Tyre, Nabatiye and Bint Jbeil.

WFP commenced distribution of food vouchers to registered refugees in Tyre, Nabatiyeh and Sidon through Action contre le Faim (ACF).

Education

UNHCR and partners continued to assist over 10,000 refugee children with remedial classes, enrollment into the Lebanese public school system and through distribution of necessary school supplies. The Minister of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) reported that Ministry records show a total of 32,000 Syrian children regularly enrolled in public schools. This is straining the public sector resources and capacities significantly.

Among the other challenges are the high drop-out rate of Syrian children from schools due to language barriers and problems encountered in dealing with the Lebanese curriculum. Remedial classes target these children and provide support in the English and French language, while the Accelerated Learning Programme targets children in need of extra education due to time out of school from displacement.

UNICEF continued distributing 'Back to School' packages consisting of books, school bags and uniforms. A total of 131 schools have now been assisted, benefitting over 27,000 Lebanese and refugee children.

Health

A total of 1,488 Syrian refugee patients benefitted from primary health care services this week, including doctor consultations, treatment of primary chronic diseases, vaccinations, diagnostic tests and free access to medications.

Health care providers focused on the provision of health awareness sessions through the different primary health care centres and through outreach visits into the refugee community. This was prioritized by UNHCR and IMC as the weather has become severe in east and north Lebanon and the risk of contracting diseases has in turn risen. Over 500 refugees benefitted from awareness sessions touching on a multitude of health topics this week.

This also follows the World Health Organization's (WHO) report of 38 cases of tuberculosis (TB) among Syrian refugees. All TB patients were immediately referred to the National TB Programme through the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH). IMC started a comprehensive assessment of overcrowded schools and primary health care centres

to verify any unreported cases of TB. In parallel, shelter and Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) actors are working to improve overall conditions in shelters so to prevent the spread of any water-borne diseases.

IMC also supported primary health care clinics and dispensaries in Beirut and the South with chronic medications as the number of Syrian refugees in those areas continues to grow. UNHCR and IMC began admitting refugee patients in Tyre and Nabatiyeh in south Lebanon to contracted hospitals in the area. In total, 325 patients in need of urgent secondary health care were admitted to hospitals in north, east, and south Lebanon this week.

An additional psychologist was deployed to the Bekaa to improve the outreach capacity through continuous home, school, shelter, and child friendly spaces' visits throughout the Bekaa. Psychologists in the area have also begun to hold mental health awareness sessions targeting both Syrian refugees in need and care providers.

Shelter

Winterization efforts continued this week, with several houses 'sealed off' and rehabilitated to better protect refugees against cold rains and winds.

In Saadnayel, five families living in temporary shelters (T-shelters) were affected by flooding. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) immediately offered to relocate affected families to nearby shelters. While most have already been transferred, an additional eight families are being prepared for relocation within the coming couple of days.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) set up over 15 shelter boxes near host families in the North and Bekaa, while training and employing refugees to help with building the boxes. So far, 36 refugees have been employed in box construction and over 75 host families have added shelter boxes to their homes. This initiative provides extra space and privacy to local Lebanese who are hosting refugees.

A new apartment building that is suitable for collective shelter was identified this week in Bar Elias. Currently six collective shelters are under rehabilitation in Marj al-Zohour, Majdal Anjar, Bar Elias, Mdoukha, Akaba and the Ein Ata areas of the Bekaa. In the North, seven collective shelters are operational with an additional two in Akroum and Tekrit under renovations.

The Cash for Rent plan provided over 800 people (160 families) with rent assistance this week. DRC will be supporting 225 families under this initiative, and are receiving an average of 40 referrals per week from local partners. Families are referred following home visits that distinguish them as vulnerable and in need of Cash for Rent assistance.

Water and Sanitation

UNHCR, Premiere Urgence (PU-AMI), UNICEF and Action Contre La Faim (ACF) continued their efforts to improve Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) conditions in refugee shelters.

UNHCR and PU-AMI distributed water filters to 176 refugee families in Beirut and south Lebanon, and conducted hygiene awareness sessions among 725 registered refugees in the area. PU-AMI also commenced the upgrading of 69 latrines and showers for host family homes and rented accommodations in the South, Mount Lebanon and

Beirut. In the Bekaa, Action Contre La Faim (ACF) constructed ten shared latrines at Dalhamiye tented settlements and another six latrines at the Saadnayel tented settlements benefitting 60 refugees.

UNICEF distributed 333 water tanks this week bringing the total to 1,000 tanks delivered to the benefit of 5,000 people. Water needs assessments are ongoing in Hermel and Al Marj.

For more information on Syrian displacement in Lebanon, please visit the Lebanon page on the webportal: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. There you will find facts, figures, and 'who does what', as well as updates on food and non-food items distributed per area and by agency.