



Over 100 of 4,000 Syrian refugees begin relocation to Germany from Lebanon on temporary basis

Beirut (11 September 2013) – One hundred and seven Syrian refugees will board the plane to Germany from Lebanon today as part of the German Humanitarian Admissions Programme (HAP) to temporarily welcome approximately 4,000 Syrian refugees until they are able to return home in safety and dignity or find other durable solutions.

The Syrian refugees leaving on Wednesday were identified by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Lebanon between June and July 2013 and will travel on the International Organization for Migration (IOM) charter flights from Beirut to Hanover.

“This is a very welcome initiative to help ease some of the pressure that Lebanon currently faces as a result of the massive influx of Syrian refugees,” said UNHCR Assistant Representative for Protection in Lebanon, Veronique Robert, “Not only will it provide 4,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees with better living conditions and improved access to services, but is a first step towards alleviating the burden on Lebanon – a small country now hosting over 730,000 refugees from Syria.”

Germany’s Humanitarian Admissions Programme is prioritising Syrian refugees with particular needs including vulnerable women and children, persons with urgent medical needs and/or close family ties to Germany.

The families traveling on the first flight include 30 men, 40 women, 35 children and three infants. Once they arrive in Hanover they will proceed to a reception centre in Friedland near Hanover, where they will participate in an extended cultural orientation programme to help them integrate within their communities and find jobs.

An additional 25 IOM-chartered flights will relocate remaining 3,900 eligible refugees identified by UNHCR and approved by the German Government throughout the months to come. The next flight is scheduled to depart Beirut in early October.

IOM and UNHCR welcome the German initiative as an important gesture of solidarity with Lebanon, at a time when the country’s response plan, amounting to US\$1.7 billion and involving the work of the Government of Lebanon and over 60 other agencies, is only 27 per cent funded.

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