

LEBANON: Aarsal Influx Inter-Agency Update

21 November 2013



Aarsal

35,000
Resident
Population of Aarsal

19,500
Registered Refugees
As of 15 October 2013

18,126
Refugees registered with
the local municipality
since 15 November 2013

72,626
Total population in
Aarsal

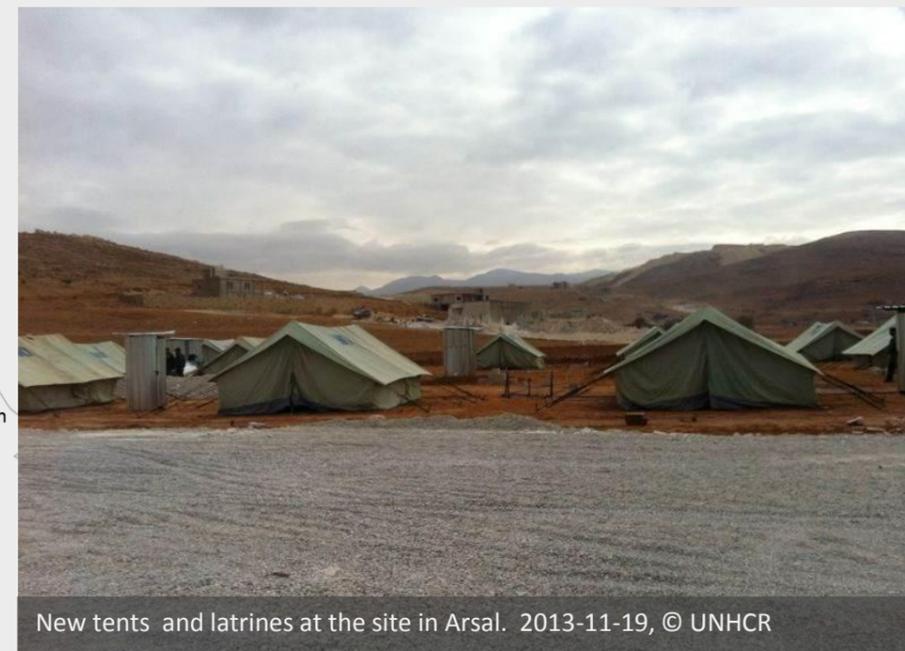
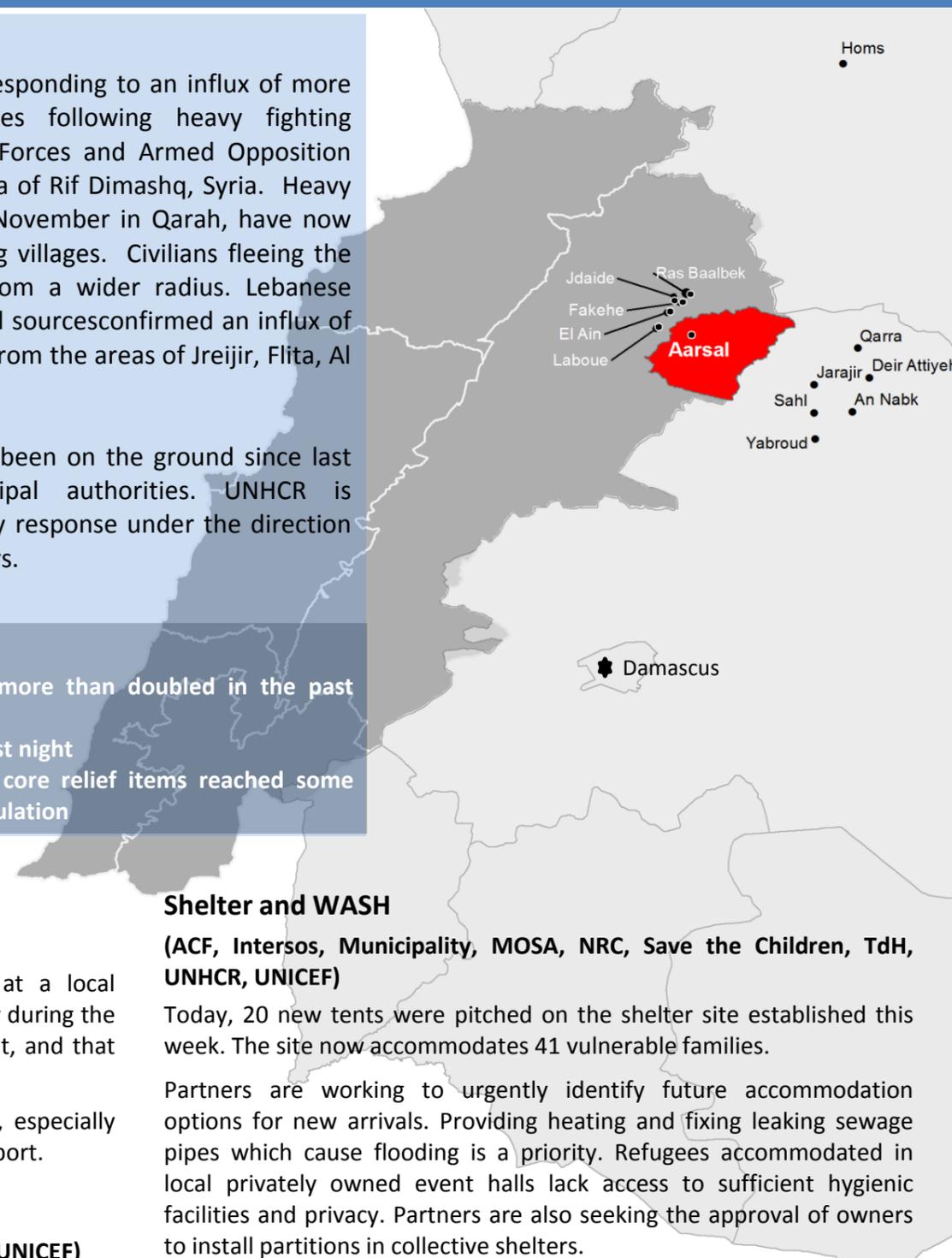
CONTEXT

Humanitarian partners are responding to an influx of more than 3,000 refugee families following heavy fighting between the Syrian Armed Forces and Armed Opposition Groups in the Qalamoun area of Rif Dimashq, Syria. Heavy clashes which began on 15 November in Qarah, have now spread to many neighbouring villages. Civilians fleeing the fighting are now arriving from a wider radius. Lebanese Armed Forces and other local sources confirmed an influx of some 500 families last night from the areas of Jreijir, Flita, Al Sahel and parts of Yabroud.

Humanitarian partners have been on the ground since last Friday to support municipal authorities. UNHCR is coordinating the inter-agency response under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Population of Aarsal has more than doubled in the past week
- Upsurge in new arrivals last night
- Distribution of food and core relief items reached some 96% of the registered population



New tents and latrines at the site in Aarsal. 2013-11-19, © UNHCR

RESPONSE

Protection

(DRC, TdH, IRC, MOSA, NRC, TdH, UNHCR, UNICEF)

Given the new arrivals, registration activities resumed today at a local community centre. 776 families were registered by the municipality during the day. Partners have observed that refugees primarily arrive at night, and that the rate of arrival slows down significantly during the day.

Partners are working to ensure that those in need of assistance, especially women and children, have access to safe spaces and emotional support.

Public Health

(AMEL, Beyond, HI, ICRC, IMC, MDM, MSF, MOPH, SHRO, UNHCR, UNICEF)

An overall increase in the number of wounded refugees has been reported. Health facilities providing free-of-charge care are currently overwhelmed. Refugees are unable to afford the minimal fees for consultation charged in some primary health centres (PHCs). Some PHCs are viewed by refugees as too slow in providing medication for chronic diseases. Partners have begun rapid assessments of collective shelters to detect chronic and infectious diseases, and to refer patients to health services in the area.

Shelter and WASH

(ACF, Intersos, Municipality, MOSA, NRC, Save the Children, TdH, UNHCR, UNICEF)

Today, 20 new tents were pitched on the shelter site established this week. The site now accommodates 41 vulnerable families.

Partners are working to urgently identify future accommodation options for new arrivals. Providing heating and fixing leaking sewage pipes which cause flooding is a priority. Refugees accommodated in local privately owned event halls lack access to sufficient hygienic facilities and privacy. Partners are also seeking the approval of owners to install partitions in collective shelters.

Core Relief Items and Food Security

(Amel, Al Jamaa Al Islamiya, Aarsal Municipality, DAF, DRC, GVC, IRC, Jousour Al Nour, KSA Relief, Prince of Qatar Aid, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP)

684 families were assisted today, bringing the total coverage of refugees assisted to some 96% of those registered. Distribution of dignity kits and winter clothing for children is ongoing.

Challenges

The identification of immediate shelter capacity to cater for newcomers and for vulnerable families is an top-priority issue. Various options are under consideration by the local authorities in coordination with MOSA. Partners are concerned that focusing distribution in collective accommodations may be creating a 'pull factor' to certain sites. Partners are therefore advocating for centralized distribution points.

Next Steps

With the evolving situation on the ground in Syria, partners are planning for alternative scenarios and continue to pre-position contingency stocks and supplies.

A contingency planning meeting took place this morning in Aarsal. Partners agreed to take comprehensive stock of resources including current human resource capacity.

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Core Relief Items

Reached	In process
96%	4%

Food

96%	4%
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