

LEBANON: Aarsal Influx Inter-Agency Update

25 November 2013



Arsal



35,000
Resident
Population of Aarsal

+



19,500
Registered Refugees
As of 15 October 2013

+



20,000
Refugees registered with
the local municipality
since 15 November 2013



74,500
Total population in
Arsal

CONTEXT

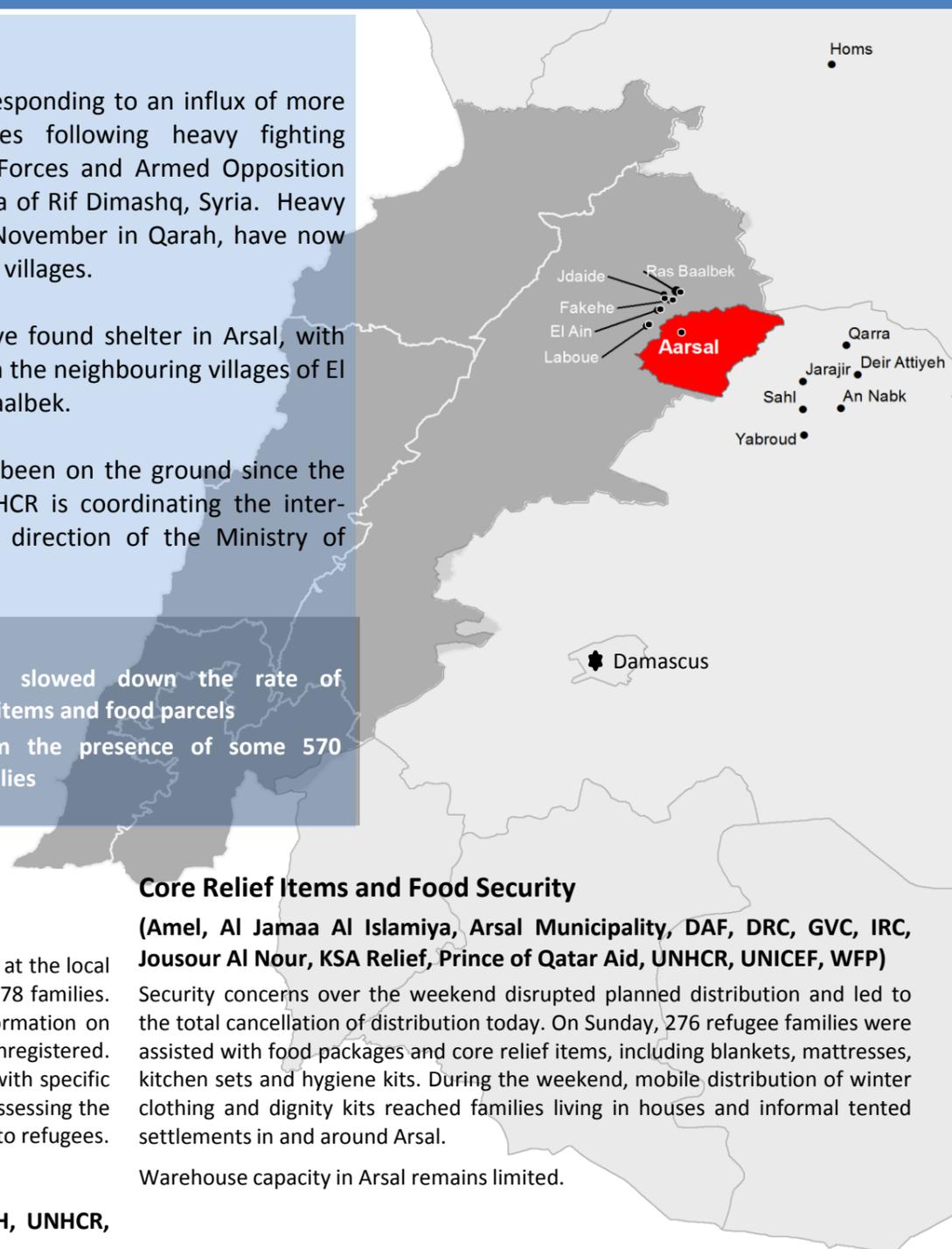
Humanitarian partners are responding to an influx of more than 3,000 refugee families following heavy fighting between the Syrian Armed Forces and Armed Opposition Groups in the Qalamoun area of Rif Dimashq, Syria. Heavy clashes which began on 15 November in Qarah, have now spread to many neighbouring villages.

The majority of refugees have found shelter in Aarsal, with others now accommodated in the neighbouring villages of El Ain, Fakehe, Chaat and Ras Baalbek.

Humanitarian partners have been on the ground since the beginning of the influx. UNHCR is coordinating the inter-agency response under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Security concerns have slowed down the rate of distribution of core relief items and food parcels
- Local authorities confirm the presence of some 570 unregistered refugee families



A group of women speak with an aid worker. These women met while fleeing from Qarah, and are now living together in an old wedding hall along with 62 other families. They arrived alone with their children, and have no news on the whereabouts of their husbands. 2013-11-22 © UNHCR

RESPONSE

Protection

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

Following a two-day break, the registration of new arrivals resumed today at the local community centre. 456 families were registered, bringing the total to 3,478 families. Registration data is being further analysed to provide more precise information on household breakdown. In addition, an estimated 570 families remain unregistered. Among those registered since the beginning of the influx, 73 individuals with specific needs have been identified, including 46 with injuries. A mobile team is assessing the overall protection situation in Aarsal and providing information on services to refugees.

Shelter and WASH

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

The temporary shelter site in Aarsal is now at full capacity with 55 vulnerable families. 24 latrines have been installed, and all families have been provided with battery-operated lanterns and heaters.

During the past two days, partners visited 920 families accommodated in private homes to assess their shelter and other needs. In addition, 50 families residing in unfinished shelters were provided with plastic sheeting, wood and other materials to help them seal-off their accommodation for winter.

Latrines and septic tanks were installed in two mosques and other collective shelters during the weekend. Partners are identifying appropriate solutions to provide refugees in collective shelters with shower facilities.

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)

Security concerns over the weekend disrupted planned distribution and led to the total cancellation of distribution today. On Sunday, 276 refugee families were assisted with food packages and core relief items, including blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets and hygiene kits. During the weekend, mobile distribution of winter clothing and dignity kits reached families living in houses and informal tented settlements in and around Aarsal.

Warehouse capacity in Aarsal remains limited.

Public Health

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

Additional human resources in primary health care have arrived in Aarsal and mobile medical units visited refugees in various locations. Over the weekend, a total of 517 refugees have received vaccinations against Measles and Polio with more planned for the coming days.

Challenges

Security concerns have impacted the ability of partners to operate at full capacity during the weekend. Repercussions were felt at the distribution site, which had to close early on Sunday. The municipality has increased security presence at the distribution site, and partners have included members of the local community in the distribution of assistance to reduce tensions.

Next Steps

The inter-agency response continues to address security issues as a matter of priority and is working with all actors to ensure conditions for a safe and coordinated response. On Tuesday, an inter-agency security team will conduct a field visit to review the security situation.

As the capacity of Aarsal to absorb additional refugees is limited, the authorities are working together with UNHCR and other partners to urgently identify further potential shelter options as part of the contingency planning process.

Partners are working to produce a GIS map based upon satellite imagery to create a map of locations where refugees are sheltered.

A meeting in Arabic will be held on Tuesday morning to ensure the participation and inclusion of local NGOs.

For more information: Jean-Nicolas Beuze + 961 79160195 beuze@unhcr.org