

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNSG Ban visits Lebanon; World Bank promises USD\$100 million to support education during visit.
- HC/RC Lazzarini launches \$8 million call for proposals to support vulnerable Lebanese communities.
- Syrians lead response in 450 informal settlements in Lebanon.
- Nearly 30,000 Lebanese returnees from Syria are highly vulnerable.
- Unrest prompts the first full shutdown of services in Palestinian camps in 2016.
- Syrian students allowed to sit school exams.
- \$580 million received to support Lebanon following London Conference.

FIGURES

# of refugees	1,067,785
52.5 %  47.5 %  53 % 	
# of returnees	35,000
# of Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS)	40,807
# of Palestine Refugees from Lebanon (PRL)	277,985
# of targeted host communities	1,500,000
Total Lebanese population	4.4 M

FUNDING

2.48 billion
requested (US\$)



UNSG Ban visits Tripoli Source: UN Photo/Mark Garten

In this issue

- SG Visits Lebanon P.1
- Lebanese Returnees Vulnerable P.2
- Refugees Lead their Response P.3
- Unrest in Palestinian Camp P.4
- Funding Updates P.5
- Maha's story P.6

UN Secretary-General Visits Lebanon

SG mobilizes support for vulnerable communities

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Lebanon from 24-26 March accompanied by the Presidents of both the World Bank, Dr. Jim Yong Kim, and the Islamic Development Bank, Dr. Ahmad Al-Madan. The purpose of the 2-day visit was to reiterate international support for Lebanon, which is currently hosting one of the largest proportions of refugees in the world as a result of the 5-year conflict in neighboring Syria.

During his visit, the SG commended the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and the international community to both uphold humanitarian principles by supporting conflict-affected Syrians and Palestinian refugees as well as vulnerable Lebanese, whilst continuing to provide public services to the country at large. The SG indicated that his objective for the visit was “to find ways to improve conditions for refugees, to support the communities hosting them, and to help mitigate the impact on Lebanon’s economy”.

During his 2-day stay, the SG visited the Nahr El-Bared Palestine refugee camp, an informal refugee settlement for Syrians in the Bekaa, Qobbeh Social Development Centre in Tripoli and Hay el Tanak urban settlement in the North which hosts a majority of poor Lebanese. The SG expressed concern over how communities were coping with crisis, indicating that “increasing numbers of Syrian and Palestinian refugees are living in dire poverty and resorting to child labour and other desperate measures. We are equally concerned by the vulnerability of Lebanese host communities, especially in the most impoverished areas.”

The World Bank Announces US\$100 million in support

In a sign of support during the visit, the World Bank announced that it would provide \$100 million, to assist the Government’s efforts to enroll all children aged 3-18 into quality education through the second Reaching All Children with Education (RACE II) plan.

Recommitting to the Agenda for Humanity

The SG used the visit to Lebanon to reiterate his [Agenda for Humanity](#), which calls upon global leaders to stand up for humanity and reduce humanitarian suffering. The Agenda



AGENDA FOR HUMANITY
5 CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

- #1 PREVENT AND END CONFLICT
- #2 RESPECT RULES OF WAR
- #3 LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND
- #4 WORKING DIFFERENTLY TO END NEED
- #5 INVEST IN HUMANITY

WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT #ShareHumanity

draws on five core responsibilities, including a fundamental shift in aid delivery by reinforcing national systems, anticipating crises, and bridging the humanitarian-development divide.

Run-Up to the World Humanitarian Summit

The SG's visit to Lebanon was part of a series of humanitarian missions by the SG ahead of the first-ever [World Humanitarian Summit](#), which will take place on 23-24 May in Istanbul. The Summit will chart a course for change towards improving the global community's assistance to the estimated 125 million people affected by conflicts and disasters worldwide. The Summit aims to generate the political will necessary for a more effective and efficient response to human suffering.

Spotlight on Lebanese Returnees

Up to 30,000 Lebanese returnees highly vulnerable after fleeing Syrian Conflict

Nearly 30,000 Lebanese returnees from the Syrian conflict are considered a highly vulnerable and under-assisted group, with assistance to returnees largely lagging behind support to refugees. To date, 28,574 returnees have been registered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Lebanon, but the agency estimates that many more are unregistered. A large number of the registered returnees reside in vulnerable areas in Akkar governorate (northern Lebanon). Nearly half of returnee households are of mixed nationality.

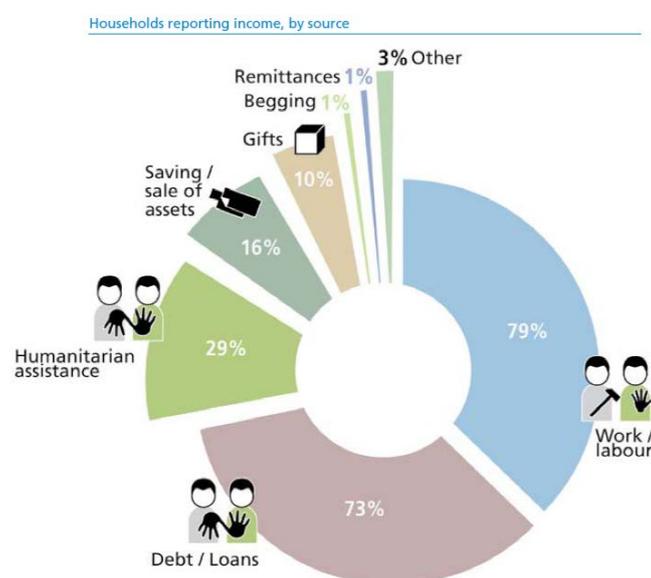
Humanitarian assistance to Lebanese returnees has improved since 2013, but they remain an under-assisted group in Lebanon.

The recently re-published 2015 IOM report, [Returnees at Risk](#), illustrates that Lebanese

returnees who have fled the conflict in Syria are now among the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon. Returnee households suffer from low incomes, debt, unemployment, and lack of property. Like refugees, returnee families are resorting to negative coping strategies to overcome their economic hardship, having lost their property and depleted their resources after fleeing the war. Such negative coping strategies include reducing food expenditure (78 per cent); reducing essential non-food expenditure such as healthcare and education (69 per cent); and buying food on credit or borrowing money to purchase food (63 per cent). The Report also suggests that in 2013, returnees received the bulk of their assistance from relatives rather than from UN agencies, NGOs, or the government; humanitarian assistance to returnees has since improved with half of returnee households having received some assistance, including food, cash and winterization support (ICRC) and support for income-generating activities (FAO).

While returnees have a recognized legal status in Lebanon, many returnees are no longer familiar with the Lebanese system and services available. IOM is working with the Lebanese government to enhance returnees' awareness about services available as well as the returnee registration system.

The IOM study indicates that 40 per cent of Lebanese returnees intend to return to Syria, and 29 per cent reported a desire to integrate locally.



Source: IOM. Note: Figures in this table add up to more than 100 per cent, because some households receive income from multiple sources.

Refugees Lead the Response

Community-based Coordination Saves Lives

An inter-agency initiative to establish Collective Site Management and Coordination (CSMC) committees is empowering Syrian refugees to mobilize assistance in settlements. Started in 2013, CSMC committees now operate in some 450 informal settlements and collective shelters across Lebanon, largely in areas of high refugee populations such as the Bekaa and the North.



A refugee representative from a CSMC committee in the Bekaa contacts service providers on behalf of her community. Source: NRC

With its track record of empowering refugee communities, CSMC has become a model of successful participatory approaches in informal settlements in Lebanon.

CSMC committees are appointed by the community and trained to map available services, outline priority needs, and identify concrete actions to resolve issues. Committees act as a conduit between refugees and responders by conveying urgent community needs, mobilizing assistance, and helping to ensure that the response is participatory and community-oriented. The aim of the Committees is to engage refugee families in the response and reduce their dependency on external assistance.

Communities in Action

In June 2015, the CSMC committee at an informal settlement in Minieh (North Governorate) played a key role in putting out a fire which threatened the camp and its residents. The Committee evacuated residents and called the Civil Defense to extinguish the fire. The Committee helped UNHCR, MoSA, and NGOs to distribute aid and rebuild the settlement, ensuring minimal duplication and a focus on the most vulnerable families. CSMC committees have also alerted NGOs to health needs, helped enroll children in schools, raised funds within the community to build roads and pathways, and negotiated water provision for informal settlements, among other initiatives.



450 CSMC committees have been **established** across Lebanon



2,200 committee members have been **trained**



50,000 refugees live in sites with **CSMC support**



The CSMC projects are currently being implemented by **NRC, DRC, Solidarités, Concern, IRC, Première Urgence-AMI, and UNHCR.**

Expansion is underway

With their track record of empowering and involving refugee communities, CSMC Committees have become a model of participatory approaches in informal settlements in Lebanon. Expansion is underway: 200 more committees are planned for 2016 to be implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Concern, and Solidarités International – with the support of European Commission's Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO), the Department for International Development (DFID), Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Irish Aid,

among other donors. Coordination of these activities takes place through the CSMC Task Force, currently co-led by NRC and UNHCR.



Unrest in Palestinian Camp Prompts Shutdown in Services

62,000 Palestine refugees without services for three days

Violent unrest in Ain el Hilweh between Islamist militants and members of the secular Fatah Movement from 28 March to 3 April resulted in three people killed and ten injured, damaged a school and shut down all NGOs and UNRWA schools and clinics in the camp for three days — the first such shutdown since August 2015.

Insecurity in Ain el Hilweh leads to a shutdown of NGO and UNRWA services in the camp for three days.

Ain el Hilweh, Lebanon's largest Palestine refugee camp, hosts 62,200 registered refugees and is a frequent site of insecurity, triggered by the presence of several heavily-armed factions inside the camp. While violence occurs regularly in Ain el Hilweh, the 6-day March clashes are the most serious reported since the August 2015 unrest, which left at least 13 people killed (including two civilians) and injured dozens, as well as temporarily displacing 3,000 people. Damage to UNRWA schools and other facilities was also reported following the August unrest (see [Humanitarian Bulletin](#) 16 July-31 August 2015).

Following the August crisis, UNRWA worked with the Palestinian communities to strengthen the Ain el Hilweh Security Committee. However, the Committee was unable to stop this latest escalation of violence, prompting the deployment of the Joint Palestinian Security Forces to the camp to bring the situation under control. Militants declared a ceasefire on 3 April, but further unrest could be ruled out as this Humanitarian Bulletin went to press.

The latest spate of violence at Ain el Hilweh has triggered concerns about insecurity in Lebanon's 12 Palestinian camps, whose total population has grown to an estimated 189,000 people since 1950. The latest unrest, which damaged at least one school and shut down schools, clinics and other services for three days, shows how frequent insecurity in the camps severely impedes Palestine refugees' access to essential services including health, education, livelihoods and other key services.

In brief: Syrian students allowed to sit school exams

On 30 March 2016, the Lebanese Government announced that all students at the public middle and high school levels of any nationality (including Lebanese returnees from Syria, Syrians, Iraqis and others) are allowed to sit official exams in 2016 without presenting transcripts or documentation of earlier schooling. The students who pass the exams will receive official certificates of success from the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and those who fail the exams will be allowed to sit for them again. The news, announced by UNHCR on 4 April, is a positive step to ensure that young refugees can progress within the Lebanese school system.

Funding Updates

Humanitarian Fund allocates \$8 million to support vulnerable communities

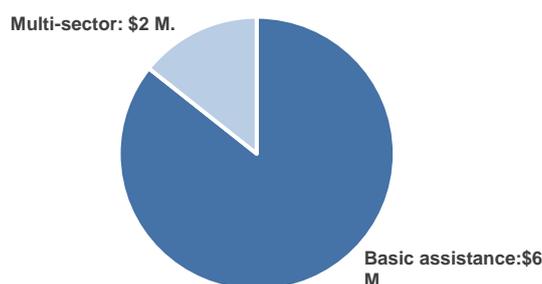
The Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator for Lebanon, Philippe Lazzarini, has launched an \$8 million call for proposals for the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) in order to support vulnerable communities in Lebanon affected by the Syrian crisis.

The call for proposals consists of two windows: \$6 million for Basic Assistance (BA) projects and \$2 million for multi-sector projects. A total of 24 humanitarian actors responded to the call – 22 international NGOs, 21 national NGOs and 1 UN agency – with a total of 54 applications amounting to almost \$23 million.

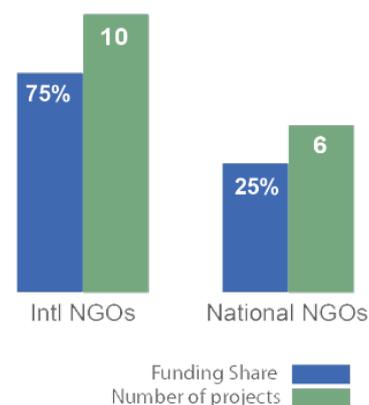
Following extensive sector reviews, 16 projects were selected for the \$8 million allocation, including 10 projects by international NGOs and 6 by national NGOs. Six of the selected projects are in Basic Assistance, with the other ten providing multi-sector support, namely GBV (4 projects), health, child protection, livelihoods, WASH, food security and food security/protection.

16 projects have been selected for the \$8 million allocation, including 10 projects by international NGOs and 6 by national NGOs.

Funding per sector: in USD\$



% of funds and # of projects by implementing partner:



Post London conference: Half a billion raised to support Lebanon

As a follow-up to the February 2016 London Conference, the humanitarian community estimates that \$580 million has been received as of the first quarter of 2016, including a carry-over of \$230 million from 2015 and \$27 million from Pooled Fund mechanisms. Initial commitments and announcements made by donors suggest that 2016 funding levels are likely to meet or exceed the funding levels of 2015, when \$1.3 billion was received.

Humanitarian funding is tracked on the [Financial Tracking System \(FTS\)](#); direct in-country reporting from donors and agencies is also received through [Activity Info](#), among other sources. To note, the post London Conference figure of \$580M is not yet available on FTS; updating is in progress to reconcile discrepancies.

Maha's Story

To mark International Women's day and as part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, women survivors of Gender Based Violence (GBV) share their stories.

Maha is a resident at the Al Dar shelter, a temporary shelter for survivors of GBV or women at-risk, ran by the local NGO [Abaad](#). Al Dar hosts single women and adolescent girls as well as women with children. The shelter provides a confidential and safe environment where women can explore their options and receive assistance from trained professional staff. Al Dar offers women crisis counseling, information on their legal rights, mental health support and access to resources. This is Maha's story.

"Like many girls I was forced to get married when I was very young. What does it mean for a young girl to get married? I knew nothing at all. I could not shoulder the responsibility of marriage and a house. They forced me to marry.

"I am very strong now. Now I can decide what I want to do and how I want to live my life. Now I can say 'No' or 'Yes' whenever I want. I can defend myself."

I was always afraid. Of course I was scared of him. I used to see him as a monster. I used to see him ferocious. I was scared of his shadow and that of any other man. I was afraid to speak up. I was afraid to cry. I was very scared of everything...to the extent that I was afraid to sleep! Can anyone be afraid of sleeping?!

I used to feel that I was nothing. It was as if I did not exist. Suddenly I decided to put an end to all this. I decided that I did not want to continue like this. I ran away. I took one step forward but I was very hesitant. I kept on moving forward and I reached Abaad organization. I was definitely very hesitant about my decision but I stayed. Once, the social worker told me 'You're strong!' I laughed a lot. I was surprised. I'm strong?? I'm a coward. I am not strong. I am weak.

No. I am strong. I am very strong now. Now I can decide what I want to do and how I want to live my life. Now I can say 'No' or 'Yes' whenever I want. I can defend myself. Most importantly, I regained my self-confidence and I trust my capacities. I do not care about having a man in my life anymore. The social worker was right. I am very strong."



Maha's diary. Source: Abaad

Sexual violence and exploitation in Lebanon

Humanitarian partners report that vulnerable women in Lebanon are being forced to marry at increasingly young ages, as marriage is often used by families to "protect" girls or alleviate financial burdens. Early marriage in the country is allowed by religious law, which in some cases legalizes the weddings of girls as young as nine years old. According to a survey on early marriage in Lebanon, around 23 per cent of married Syrian women registered as refugees married before the age of 18, as well as 10 per cent of interviewed Lebanese women. This leaves many young women and girls at risk of sexual violence and exploitation, as parents tend to limit support to their daughters after they are married.

On 31 March, Lebanese police rescued 75 women who had been held captive and forced into sexual slavery in Jounieh, north of Beirut. The women were mostly Syrian, according to reports. The Internal Security Forces have entrusted the women to NGOs specializing in women's rights and human trafficking. The latest incident suggests an upwards trend in gender-based violence and exploitation in Lebanon.

For further information, please contact **Manal Sarrouf**, sarrouf@un.org or **Anne-France White**, white5@un.org or email: ochalebanon@un.org | OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at www.unocha.org | www.reliefweb.int