####  MAQ Coordination Meeting

***Minutes of meeting***

Date: 04.10.2019

Place: Al Qaa Municipality

Participants: MoIM, Mayor of Al Qaa, UNHCR, MSA-IRC, UNHCR, GVC, Medair, IRC, AVSI, TDH, AFSI,AnaAqra, ACF, Himaya

* Al Qaa/MAQ is hosting around 50,000 Lebanese and Syrian refugees in an area that expands over 182 KM2 with 80 km of borders with Syria and very limited municipal means when it comes to municipal police, yearly budget and support given to law enforcement like GSO and LAF. A lot of families, Lebanese and Syrians, are approaching the municipality in need of basic needs and assistance while the municipality has very limited resources whether financial or human to respond to the increasing demands and needs of MAQ/Qaa, noting that the municipality is keen on preventing violence against women and children dropping out or not enrolled in schools. The mayor stresses the importance of co-existence, combat racism and hatred, respect of human dignity and municipality’s constant efforts to support and aims to create job opportunities as to avoid locals as well to relocate to another area. The municipality supports 17 PWSN is their livelihoods and had faced 15 events of flash flooding in 2018/2019 which none were compensated by authorities.
* Mayor stresses that there is a need to provide the host community with assistance similar to the Syrian refugees as this is exacerbating tension as the host community is becoming more and more vulnerable while Syrian Refugees are receiving un-needed additional assistance such as shelter assistance that is being sold by refugees once received. Mayor also stresses that the Locals have still not gotten over the eight suicide bombers in 2016.
* The mayor states the municipality imposes some restrictions on refugees such as the curfew set after 20:00 pm and the curfew was set due to some theft incidents faced by some refugees in the area. He mentioned theft incidents of archeological objects and hunting guns from a bungalow. In the summer in had mentioned that curfews were meant to avoid frictions between Syrians and Lebanese especially during events like festivals.
* The mayor states the importance of WASH partners to stop creating septic tanks to each tent especially those that are close to agricultural land and not being dislodged. This exacerbates health risks as well. He suggested to create network channels and one pit that connects to the tents in informal settlements. . MoIM states that there has been several meetings and it was agreed with agencies that septic tanks need to follow a certain criteria prior to being set or else they will legally be followed. The mayor also suggested to have sugar cane trees planted for treatment and this is to be coordinated with GVC and IRC. He asked for a disludging truck and a small waste water treatment plant.
* Mayor stresses how unacceptable the solid waste management situation is especially since most Syrian refugees attend to burning, noting that the mayor acknowledges the receipt of 100 garbage bins and a garbage disposal truck, but as mentioned the municipality does not have the resources or capacity to run the truck (human, labor cost, fuel cost,…) . He urges to have a solid waste management plant present. UNHCR stated that Al Qaa is one of the municipalities prioritized for a solid waste management plant and they will assist the municipality to develop integrated strategies to resolve the solid waste management issue in coordination with UNDP; however, this will require further assessment to be conducted in the area to confirm the benefit of the plant.
* With respect to illegal entry, the Mayor states that the reason behind their movement to Lebanon is not justified and believes is due to domestic differences/ socio-economic reasons rather than security and/or safety.
* Mayor states that the agencies conduct multiple assessments in the area with no tangible actions seen afterwards and suggests that the funding is provided to the municipality to establish a coordination center in charge of coordinating the efforts with NGOs and avoid duplication of assessments and studies. to conduct a full assessment for both host and refugee community and share it regularly with agencies when needed.
* MoIM also stated that in coordination with all agencies they are making sure to visit the mayors of each area to find a common solution for the problems and/or challenges faced.
* With respect to Education, the Mayor states the importance of having insured and safe transportation for children and states that basic literacy and numeracy programs do not offer formal certification. The mayor stated that agencies should not come to Al Qaa to transport children to Hermel to attend such programs especially since the program was promised to be implemented in Al Qaa area and recruit one local from Al Qaa. Mayor also urges support to be provided to technical schools and vocational training to be able to provide a skill to both host and refugee community which in return also enhance peaceful co-existence. UNHCR states that rehabilitation of public school inauguration will take place soon, but the Mayor pointed out that that was not requested but what was requested was to add additional 5 classes in Al Qaa public school but that was not done
* Mayor also stated that doctors without borders (MSF) had promised to rent a clinic in Al Qaa but then to his surprise they rented in Al Hermel and did not recruit a local from Al Qaa as per agreement. In addition their cars don’t have plate numbers and therefore are illegal.
* Mayor suggests that tender processes for timber, any sort of assistance and recruitment to be done with Al Qaa residents. Agencies explained that shelter kits are provided centrally and follow international criteria set and hence cannot be done on a local level.
* Mayor calls for a clear understanding on WFP’s criteria for contracting shops as they have had multiple discussions with no clear answer and Mayor believes this is crucial to support co-existence especially since it is starting to seem like Syrian refugees are not purchasing from Al Qaa due to religious reasons. UNHCR stated that the message was relayed and WFP are conducting assessments in the area that will take time.
* ILO are working to build a market on the border that mayor believes will boost the economical situation. He also stated that it is important to build a latrine at the border; however, has to be cement and/or different than the prefabs offered by GVC as this is the entrance of Al Qaa and the Mayor wants it to look neat. Mayor stated that water availability and electricity is not an issue as well as having a local present for cleaning purposes pending that latrines available are neat. WASH will follow up with the Mayor on the matter this upcoming weeks.
* GVC stated that dislodging activities have been ceased since May due to the closure of the treatment plant in Iaat and up until now a solution or a place to get rid of the dislodged water is still not allocated. A tender project though was initiated to dislodge for emergency cases solely. GVC to coordinate with UNICEF on the matter.
* Ana Akrak organization states that a meeting was held with the Mayor to inform him of the project done in coordination with TDH-Italy. A bus will be provided that fits 16 persons and an educational cohort to support refugees with skills to be added. They are and ready to have additional safe and legal buses available for transportation. The driver and teachers will be from Al Qaa.
* In September, a unified assessment again for Eligibility for weatherproofing kits was conducted through Medair in coordination with the municipality. The team assessed 1,745 tents in three cadasters in Sahil Al Qaa. 72%, equivalent to 1,269 HHs, were seen as eligible to receive the kits, of which majority, 44% or 783 HHs are to receive light repair kits, 25% or 484 HHs will receive medium repair kits and only 2 households will receive a new arrival kit. Medair continues to coordinate with GVC especially to avoid duplication as GVC responds to emergencies. The plan was to distribute shelter kits for one week starting 23rd of September; however, this was postponed for the moment.
* Mayor stated that he wishes to know if unregistered cases are receiving shelter kits. Medair confirmed that if eligible they are.
* Agencies are to share vacancies with the municipality; however, agencies stress that recruitment is based on qualification of the person and adherence to their agencies’ criteria.