UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Middle East Situation

Lebanon – Flash Update #9

27 April – 3 May 2026

Representative Karolina Lindholm Billing visits internally displaced families staying at a school turned into a collective shelter in Saida. ©UNHCR/Elie Arja

Key figures

1,049,328
displaced people registered through Lebanon's government relief platform (MoSA 1 April)

119,623
internally displaced people hosted in collective shelters (DRM 30 April)

626
operational emergency collective shelters (DRM 30 April)

8,020
injuries since 2 March (MoPH 30 April)

2,586
fatalities since 2 March (MoPH 30 April)

306,888
Syrians who have crossed back to Syria between 2 March – 2 May (Syria GAPC)

64,865
Lebanese have crossed to Syria between 2 March – 2 May (Syria GAPC)

Overview

- **While the ceasefire extension is ongoing, the situation remains fragile and contested**, with sustained hostilities and insecurity particularly affecting South Lebanon and parts of Nabatieh and the Bekaa governorates. Daily reports of demolitions, airstrikes, overflights, and evacuation warnings continue across South Lebanon, driving renewed displacement risk. Israeli evacuation warnings have now expanded to 54 Lebanese villages, bringing the total number of affected localities to 110, including 55 villages below the so-called 'Yellow Line', underscoring the continued volatility of the operating environment in the south.
- **Government-led "Kulluna Lil Watan" campaign:** In line with the Government of Lebanon's leadership of the Lebanon Response Plan and the emergency response, the Ministry of Social Affairs has launched the national campaign "Kulluna Lil Watan" ("All of us, for the homeland"), aimed at establishing a unified national identity for assistance delivered under the leadership of the Lebanese state, its donors, and its UN and NGO partners. Humanitarian partners have been requested to brand assistance under the campaign.

UNHCR response

The renewed escalation and displacement have driven widespread fear, anxiety, and psychological distress, particularly among communities already exhausted by years of instability and repeated displacement. While the ceasefire initially instilled hope in an eventual end to the conflict and prospects for return, displacement remains high and humanitarian needs acute. UNHCR and its partners are delivering lifesaving protection services, shelter assistance, core relief items (CRIs), and cash support to displaced Lebanese and refugees. Alongside the emergency response to internal displacement, UNHCR continues to implement its essential protection interventions, including community-based protection, shelter, multi-purpose cash assistance, and durable solutions programmes for refugees.

Spotlight on shelter partitioning: Privacy is dignity

In overcrowded collective shelters across Lebanon, displaced families are living next to each other with little separation. Through shelter rehabilitation and the installation of wooden partitions, often fitted with basic doors and locks, UNHCR and partners are transforming shared spaces in classrooms and courtyards into defined family spaces that provide privacy, improve physical security, and restore dignity.

At Madame Baaini School in Beirut, families were previously sleeping in corners of stairwells, courtyards, and shared rooms, exposed to constant movement and noise. Batoul, a displaced mother of four, described how her family initially slept under a staircase after fleeing their home. With no enclosed space, she tried to create privacy using blankets, while water would drip down whenever upper floors were cleaned. The installation of a partition has turned that exposed corner into a proper room. "Now I have a room for my children," she said. "I can rest, and I feel safe again."

For families caring for people with serious health needs, the impact has been immediate. Ali, a displaced father of three, explained that before partitioning there was no quiet place for his father, who undergoes regular dialysis, to lie down and recover. Having a defined, closable space now allows his father to rest safely after treatment, easing the strain on both of them, even as the family continues to hope for a return home.

Women displaced in the shelter consistently highlighted that privacy is about more than comfort—it is about dignity and security. "Thanks to the partitions in the school that became our new home, I can finally sleep better with my children," said Zeinab, a displaced Lebanese mother of two toddlers. "I can close our space, change my clothes in privacy, and regain my dignity." Shelter partners and UNHCR personnel observed that once family areas were clearly defined, daily stress levels decreased, tensions visibly reduced, and shared living arrangements became more manageable, contributing to calmer relations in an already overcrowded environment.

While a family space in a collective shelter can obviously never replace the comfort, privacy, and dignity of one's home that the displaced families have been forced to leave behind, it can at least serve as an emergency solution if enhanced through simple shelter interventions like installations of partitions, doors, and locks. These modest but practical improvements can play a critical role in protection, security, and preserving dignity during displacement.

UNHCR Representative Karolina Lindholm Billing visits a rehabilitated collective shelter in Beirut, where partitioning has transformed classrooms into private family spaces. ©UNHCR

Coordination

Under the leadership of the Minister of Social Affairs and within the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) framework, UNHCR Lebanon co-leads the Inter-Sector Coordination Group with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), OCHA, and UNDP. UNHCR also co-leads the Protection Sector with MoSA and Oxfam; the Shelter/Core Relief Items Sector with MoSA and the Norwegian Refugee Council, and co-chairs the Cash Working Group (CWG) alongside MoSA and World Vision International. In situations of internal displacement, UNHCR plays a coordination and response role within the sectors the Agency co-leads with the Government and NGOs, while maintaining overall responsibility for the refugee response in line with its mandate.

Protection

Protection needs in Lebanon remain acute, with around 1 million people self-registered as displaced, of whom nearly 120,000 currently reside in 626 collective shelters, many for prolonged periods amid continued insecurity and lack of access to homes and services in areas of origin. Repeated and cyclical displacement, overcrowding, and inadequate

privacy in shelters and informal settings are increasing risks of violence, exploitation, gender-based violence, and psychosocial distress, particularly for women and children, who comprise the majority of the displaced population. Children are disproportionately affected by prolonged insecurity, localised violence, and disrupted education, with protection partners reporting rising psychosocial distress, including suicidal ideation and attempts among children. UNHCR assessments indicate that displaced households face urgent, interlinked needs, with cash assistance (79%), shelter support (29%), and protection services (19%) most frequently cited.

Protection risks are further compounded for displaced refugees and others who lack valid residency or documentation, as movement restrictions, particularly at checkpoints, limit safe mobility, relocation to more secure areas, and access to services. Uncertainty around returns to areas of origin within Lebanon and limited availability of secure and dignified accommodation are related concerns regularly raised. Access to people in hard-to-reach areas remains a key challenge, with route security affected by unexploded ordnance, conflict debris, and damaged infrastructure, alongside movement restrictions that delay timely support for individuals at heightened risk, while capacity, staffing, and funding constraints continue to limit the scale of the response. UNHCR and its nine protection partners—among the 73 partners reporting under the Protection Sector in Lebanon—have despite these constraints reached **more than 22,200 individuals with targeted protection interventions**, including child protection, GBV prevention and response, protection for persons with specific needs, and community-based protection activities, both inside and outside collective shelters.

How UNHCR and Protection Sector partners are responding

156,900+
individuals reached by protection interventions, including general protection, child protection and GBV prevention and response (14% supported by UNHCR)

71,200+
individuals benefitting from information sessions, awareness sessions, and individual consultations on how to access services or other information (15% supported by UNHCR)

57,600+
Individuals receiving mental health psychosocial support, including community-based psychosocial support (8% supported by UNHCR)

- **UNHCR and partners reached 10,498 people through protection information, awareness sessions, and individual consultations**, providing guidance on security, available services, and key protection risks like child protection and GBV risk mitigation for displaced families both inside and outside collective shelters. As part of these efforts, and in response to widespread disruption to education, UNHCR amplified the Ministry of Education's online learning campaign, reaching **over 73,000 people** through its WhatsApp channel and **157,000 refugee families** by SMS with school-aged children. With **461 schools** continuing to be used as shelters, affecting **117,000 students**, and more than **194,000 Lebanese and refugee children** learning online, UNHCR's dedicated online page, developed to amplify the Ministry of Education's remote learning guidance and resources, was accessed **over 23,500 times**, helping families navigate available distance-learning options during the emergency.
- **Recognising that displacement disproportionately affects persons with disabilities and creates additional protection risks, UNHCR and partners are providing targeted support**, including emergency protection cash, specialised case management, and in-kind assistance, to address barriers to security, dignity, and access to essential services for displaced persons with disabilities. As part of this response, **634 persons with disabilities** received emergency protection cash, **150** received emergency case management and individual follow-up by trained social workers, and, based on identified needs, **35** were provided with assistive devices to improve mobility and independence. UNHCR also released **over 3,000 packs** of adult diapers to partners for distribution.

8,000+ Syrian refugees supported

through counselling and a one-time cash grant of USD 100, aimed at reducing risks and mitigating harm during their return back to Syria under the current challenging circumstances.

UNHCR launched the **return due to force majeure (RFM)** procedure on 1 April to respond to humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees who perceive no viable alternative than to return to Syria.

- **UNHCR provided mental health and psychosocial support to 4,595 people, including community-based psychosocial support**, through individual and group interventions delivered in collective shelters and host communities by trained social workers, counsellors, and psychologists, prioritising displaced individuals experiencing distress linked to insecurity, repeated displacement, and prolonged shelter stays. As part of this response, child protection partners in Beirut recently reached **466 individuals (453 Lebanese and 13 displaced refugees)** through psychosocial support, recreational activities, and positive parenting sessions delivered across **16 locations**, including two sites outside collective shelters (Ein El Mrayse and Horsh Beirut),

where partners reported concerns such as child bullying and emotional distress linked to unstable living conditions.

- **UNHCR provided emergency case management support to 704 individuals, including 129 children (almost 40% of all case management reported at sector level),** prioritising people facing acute and complex protection risks such as serious medical vulnerability, violence, family separation, eviction, or exploitation. Case management is delivered in line with national guidance and protection standards and in close coordination with national and local actors, helping reinforce national response mechanisms at a time when needs significantly exceed capacity of national systems. This work involves individual risk assessments, tailored case plans, coordinated referrals, and sustained follow-up to reduce protection risks. During the reporting period, UNHCR mobilised partners on short notice to deliver life-saving protection interventions for refugees at imminent risk, despite access and security constraints. Through close coordination with protection partners and emergency responders, refugees facing acute protection risks were safely evacuated from a border area controlled by the IDF and exposed to active hostilities, and supported with access to healthcare and secure accommodation, while ensuring protection safeguards, including prevention of family separation.

Shelter and core-relief items (CRIs)

The response continues to operate under conditions of extreme pressure and imbalance. While collective shelters in several key locations remain saturated, most notably Beirut which hosts over 40% of internally displaced people while accounting for less than a quarter of shelters nationally, the vast majority of displaced families reside outside collective shelters, relying on host communities, rented accommodation, or informal arrangements. In the South, renewed insecurity has reversed earlier displacement trends, underscoring the fluid and largely reversible nature of displacement. Assessments of displaced refugees known to UNHCR indicate that around 90% are living outside collective shelters, underscoring the scale of shelter and core relief item needs beyond formal sites. As displacement persists, cash assistance is key to support more sustainable shelter solutions outside of collective shelters – including through cash-for-shelter and core relief items – and mitigate protection risks linked to overcrowding, precarious housing, and limited access to basic household items.

How UNHCR and Shelter Sector partners are responding

166,400+
people assisted through the distribution of core relief items (56% supported by UNHCR)

388
collective shelters with ongoing repair activities (17% supported by UNHCR)

218
collective shelters with repair works completed (10% supported by UNHCR)

- **Partitioning and upgrades to reduce protection risks in collective shelters:** UNHCR continues to support displaced families in collective shelters through targeted repairs, upgrades, and partitioning, aimed at improving privacy, security, and dignified living conditions in overcrowded sites. To date, partition kits have been deployed across **25 collective shelters**, benefiting **611 internally displaced households**, helping mitigate protection and GBV risks associated with shared living spaces while enabling more organised use of limited shelter capacity.
- **Maintaining shelter functionality amid site closures and shifting dynamics:** UNHCR, in coordination with shelter sector partners, continues to adapt shelter interventions as population movements and site availability fluctuate, prioritising collective shelters expected to remain operational to maximise impact and minimise loss of investment. To date, **64 collective shelters** are benefiting from ongoing repair activities, supporting **12,706 displaced people (3,282 households)**, while **21 sites** have been completed and **19** remain under rehabilitation. In parallel, shelter sector partners, including UNHCR, are adjusting site prioritisation in response to closures, following instances where rehabilitated shelters were closed shortly after upgrades, underscoring the need for flexible planning and close coordination with authorities to redirect resources where they can sustain dignified living conditions.

UNHCR receives an airlift carrying more than 900 core relief items, including kitchen sets, solar lamps, and tents. ©UNHCR/Houssam Hariri

- **Sustaining large-scale CRI assistance inside collective shelters:** Core relief items remain essential to uphold basic living standards in high-density shelter environments. To date, UNHCR has assisted **83,636 people (19,452 households)** through CRI distributions inside collective shelters, with **216,495 individual items distributed**, including mattresses, blankets, solar lamps, jerry cans, kitchen sets, and clothing. With shelters in Beirut and

southern areas operating at or near full capacity, UNHCR continues targeted CRI distributions to newly affected households and sites not yet reached to mitigate protection risks and support minimum living conditions for displaced families.

- **Responding to rising CRI needs outside collective shelters:** Recognising that a large proportion of displaced families remain outside collective shelters, UNHCR has also maintained CRI distributions beyond formal sites. To date, **29,695 CRIs** have been distributed outside collective shelters, reaching **3,529 displaced refugees (750 households)** as well as **5,165 displaced Lebanese (1,038 households)**. Requests for CRIs outside collective shelters have increased following new displacement, particularly for mattresses and pillows, placing additional pressure on available stocks and reinforcing the need for continued prioritisation of the most vulnerable households through referrals and case-by-case assessments.

Cash assistance

Cash needs remain acute across displaced populations as insecurity, repeated displacement, and limited shelter options continue to erode household coping capacity. Assessments indicate that cash assistance is the most frequently cited priority need, reported by 79% of displaced refugee households assessed by UNHCR, reflecting the combined strain of rising living costs, loss of livelihoods, and costs related to shelter, health, and basic services. In parallel, movement restrictions, limited access to services, and the high cost of renting or maintaining accommodation are increasing reliance on negative coping strategies, heightening protection risks, and reinforcing the critical role of timely, flexible cash assistance to stabilise households in both collective shelters and out-of-site arrangements.

How UNHCR and Cash Sector partners are responding

490,883
Lebanese reached with Emergency Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance through the Government-led SRSN

110,000
vulnerable refugees reached with emergency Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance

8,478
vulnerable refugees reached by UNHCR with Emergency Protection Cash Assistance grants

- **UNHCR continues to provide Emergency Protection Cash Assistance (EPCA) to displaced refugees facing acute protection risks.** In parallel, coordination has been strengthened following MoSA's endorsement of the Protection Cash Assistance Guidelines for Emergency, providing a framework to support access to protection cash for IDPs at heightened risk, including for safe accommodation. Since the escalation, **1,722 EPCA grants** have been issued, reaching **8,478 individuals**, prioritising households experiencing displacement, shelter insecurity, and protection concerns. At the time of assessment, **70%** of targeted households were displaced and settled, **15%** displaced and still on the move, and **15%** remained in conflict-affected areas. Households supported through EPCA frequently include single caregivers (**16%**), families with serious medical conditions (**15%**) and persons with disabilities (**9%**), reflecting the targeting of households with heightened protection risks.
- **UNHCR has finalised the emergency multi-purpose cash assistance targeting approach**, identifying an additional **3,000** refugee households (**13,300 individuals**) affected by the crisis and prioritised based on shelter conditions, protection risks, household composition, and economic vulnerability. These households will receive assistance pending implementation of emergency MPCA for April and May in collaboration with WFP.
- **Evidence-based targeting and coordination:** UNHCR's emergency cash response is guided by an **evidence-based vulnerability scorecard**, which ranks eligible households across four core domains—**shelter conditions, protection risks, household composition and economic vulnerability**—allowing assistance to be directed to the highest-risk households first. The targeting approach has been shared with the Cash Working Group to support coordination and complementarity with other cash actors, while implementation modalities prioritise secure and timely delivery, primarily through financial service providers.

EPCA enabling safe shelter

A displaced refugee household of nine, including seven children, displaced from southern Lebanon, was identified as living without adequate shelter and exposed to serious protection risks. Emergency protection cash assistance enabled the family to secure a rented room, improving their security and living conditions, as confirmed through follow-up visits. Additional support was provided through basic relief items and referrals to child protection and livelihoods services to help stabilise the family's situation and reduce the risk of further displacement.

UNHCR Emergency Appeal for Lebanon

USD 61 million

The inter-agency **Lebanon Flash Appeal** calls for **US$ 308.3 million** to provide lifesaving assistance and protection to one million affected people over three months, from March to May 2026. Within the framework of this appeal, **UNHCR requires US$ 61 million** to reach **600,000** displaced people with protection, shelter, core-relief items, and cash assistance. These programs are aimed to reinforce and complement the Government-led emergency response, and the funding for the appeal should enable humanitarian partners to rapidly scale up assistance across priority sectors over the three-month period. Confirmed funding and projections against the emergency appeal reach **approximately 40% of needs** to date. Flexible and timely contributions are essential to:

- Maintain live-saving protection services;
- Improve and scale-up collective shelters so they are safe, dignified, and accessible;
- Provide financial support to the most vulnerable displaced households, especially those outside shelters;
- Replenish essential supplies so that UNHCR can respond quickly to further waves of displacement.

UNHCR is grateful to donors who have already stepped up to support and welcomes additional flexible contributions that enable teams on the ground to adapt quickly as the situation evolves.

UNHCR and partners presence

UNHCR maintains presence in Lebanon through its Country Office and three Field Offices (Beirut, Tripoli, and Zahle) with a workforce of more than 300 personnel. We deliver our programmes with 13 I/NGO partners (9 national, 4 international) and in close coordination and collaboration with the Government of Lebanon.

UNHCR is grateful for the support from our donors who contributed to this operation

Australia I Austria | Canada I China | Denmark I European Union I Finland | Germany I Iceland | Ireland | Italy I Monaco I Netherlands (Kingdom of the) I Norway | Republic of Korea I Sweden I Switzerland | Private donors

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