

Lebanon Update

Situation in North Lebanon

February 4- February 10 2012



A UNHCR field officer walks next to laundry hanging on a fence inside a school in the Wadi Khaled region, on the Syrian-Lebanese border, North of Lebanon. © UNHCR – Dalia Khamissy - October 4, 2011.

Highlights of the week

Numbers:

The number of currently registered Syrians with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) is 6,133, marking a decrease of 242 persons since last week. Verification exercises during the week revealed the following reasons for the decline in current registrations:

- 162 persons moved from their place of residence without leaving any information as to their current whereabouts;
- 95 persons moved to different areas in Lebanon to pursue better livelihoods; and
- 34 Syrians returned to Syria.

Conversely, 51 displaced Syrians who had been living in North Lebanon just this week registered with UNHCR and the HRC.

Distribution:

HRC, Caritas Migrant Center, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and UNHCR completed the January distribution of food, hygiene kits, milk, winter clothes coupons and fuel. Assistance was provided to the displaced and the most vulnerable of the host families. In collaboration with UNHCR, UNICEF distributed toys and clothes to 92 children.

Protection and Security:

The week saw an increased presence of Lebanese security forces in Akroom Mountain and Wadi Khaled areas for a brief period reportedly in response to an increase in weapons and armed persons.

Further land mines were laid on the Syrian side. This together with reported military operations in Syria close to border areas continued to cause unease.

Outreach activities and home visits reveal that domestic violence against woman and children is a concern. The Individual Case Management Committee (ICMC), a group composed of UNHCR, DRC, MoSA and other specialized partners, assists persons with specific needs and is addressing the problem in a variety of ways, including through counseling and psycho-social support. Persons in immediate risks are offered safe shelters. Furthermore, as a preventative and rehabilitative measure, home visits, women empowerment activities and dialogue sessions are being held to integrate both the displaced and local communities, to avoid marginalization of the abused and to encourage community mobilization.

Registration certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC remain on hold and no circulation permits have been issued. Syrian residents in the north continue to feel frustrated at their lack of mobility and consequent inability to find temporary work.

Education:

UNHCR's implementing partner Save the Children Sweden (SCS) reported that 347 students are attending the remedial classes; children maintained a good attendance level despite the security situation in Wadi Khaled.

Efforts to improve school enrollment and attendance continued this week: UNHCR, SCS, DRC, and the MoSA social workers continued their regular school and home visits, including meeting with parents and teachers to monitor the educational needs of the displaced Syrian children.

In addition, recreational activities such as theater and drawing classes, singing and educational games are taking place on a regular basis in the established Child Friendly Spaces in Wadi Khaled.

UNHCR and partners continue to look for incentives to enroll children in school and encourage continuous attendance.

Situational Overview

Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 6,000 Syrian refugees into northern Lebanon. Many subsequently returned to Syria, while others relocated inside Lebanon. Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC registered and assisted over 11,000 persons. Currently there are 6,133 persons (1,164 households) registered in the north and Akkar, residing mostly with host families in difficult circumstances.

Those who remain are unwilling to return until stability and security are restored in their Syrian villages. Many individuals and families have been deeply affected by the events that caused them to flee and are reluctant to return home until the situation stabilizes.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs):

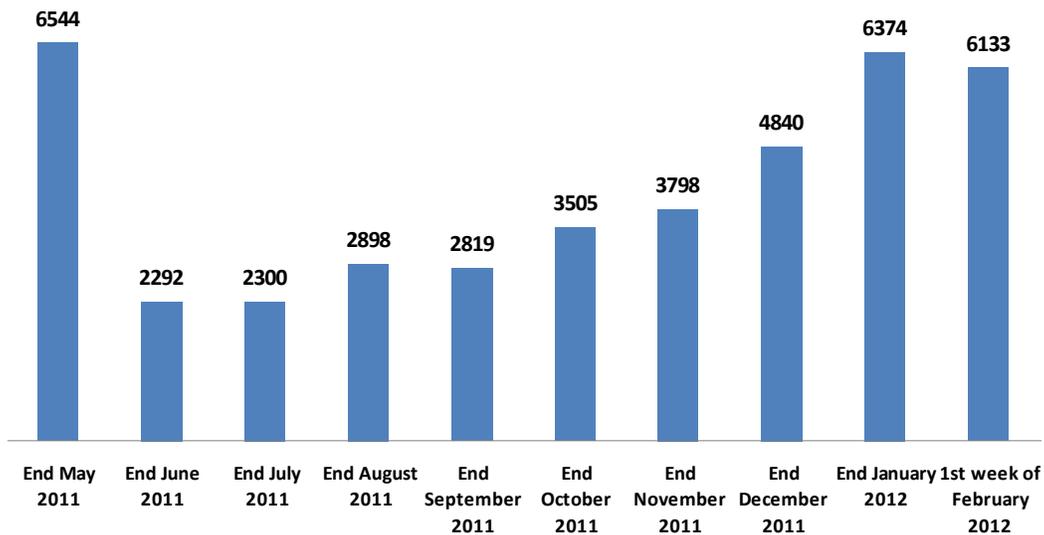
With the support of UNHCR, the Aydamoun public library received an additional 300 books from the Al Sabil Association. Volunteers meet on a daily basis to classify and record the donated books.

Community Services:

UNHCR and DRC conducted group meetings in several villages in Wadi Khaled regarding the creation of a new community center. This project is aimed at mobilizing and empowering the community, encouraging a participatory approach toward developing the center.

Age Group	Females	Percentage	Males	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0-04	512	20%	605	23%	1,117	21%
05-11	596	23%	602	23%	1,198	23%
12-18	447	17%	478	18%	925	18%
18-29	655	25%	583	22%	1,238	24%
30-39	424	16%	381	14%	805	15%
40-49	245	9%	261	10%	506	10%
50-59	109	4%	114	4%	223	4%
60+	69	3%	52	2%	121	2%
Total	3,057	50%	3,076	50%	6,133	100%

Displaced per Month



Trends	1st Week Feb
Newly Registered	50
Deactivated	0
Internally Moving	95
Returned to Syria	34
Absent during Distribution	162
Active Population	6,133

A number of displaced Syrians crossed into Lebanon earlier but just this week approached our Office. Local mayors and NGOs played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

Identification and registration occurs on a daily basis by outreach teams. UNHCR and the HRC verify the numbers during the monthly distribution of food/non-food items. Persons found no longer to be in the area are de-registered. Many of these are known to have returned to Syria.

Coordination

A very solid coordinated response and positive working relations with the government's HRC and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) were established at the outset to the benefit of the refugees and hosting communities. These partnerships continue and together with other UN and NGO partners, the needs of refugees and affected communities are being holistically addressed. They include the following:

- Protection interventions to ensure safety, physical integrity and non-refoulement;
- Assistance to meet basic needs;
- Education and remedial classes;
- Provision of medical and psycho-social care.

A common database is in use by the HRC and UNHCR, and referral mechanisms were established to enable the displaced persons to access assistance through specialized partners.

Protection

The vast majority of Syrians arriving to Lebanon have come from Tal Kalakh and Homs. They express fear and anxiety about returning and most do not feel that the situation is safe enough for them to do so yet.

Most of those who have recently arrived have crossed at official border crossings expressing fear of going through the unofficial ones. Residents in the north report that the heavy presence of the Syrian army in border areas, as well as the presence of land mines on the Syrian side, prevents more people from fleeing to Lebanon.

UNHCR maintains regular contact with the Lebanese authorities and civil society representatives to follow-up on the security situation of the displaced population in the north of Lebanon. UNHCR has provided guidance to the government on the appropriate treatment of army deserters. A planned training of Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF) remains pending until the authorities confirm a date.

UNHCR continues to follow-up on the cases of Syrians who are detained for illegal entry or stay, of which there are relatively few, underscoring the positive humanitarian approach maintained by the authorities

According to UNHCR's estimates, over 165 wounded have been treated in various hospitals in Lebanon since the beginning of the influx. Expenses related to their treatment are covered by the Lebanese authorities through the HRC. Their treatment and needs are followed-up by UNHCR and partners.

Registration certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC are still on hold. The certificates are a means to show that the person is someone who is registered with UNHCR and the HRC and are aimed to prevent fraud and facilitate access to needed services. Circulation permits have also not been issued by the authorities. Displaced Syrians are increasingly worried about their inability to move freely.

Community Services

Outreach workers from the MoSA and DRC continue to visit the displaced Syrians at homes and in schools in Wadi Khaled, Tall Bire, and Tripoli in order to counsel them, assess their needs, and refer newcomers to UNHCR and HRC for registration.

Quick Impact Projects

UNHCR's implementing partner, DRC, has completed the rehabilitation of two public gardens: the first is located in the Social Development Center (SDC) of Amayer and the second next to Moukaybel municipality. In addition, DRC finalized the renovation work and equipment for the public library in Aydamoun village, and the cine-club in Wadi Khaled.

UNHCR and partners have established ten Child Friendly Spaces in Wadi Khaled. These spaces are meant to provide a safe place where children can engage in educational games and activities such as theater and drawing classes and singing.

Shelter

Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. Just over 200 persons are accommodated in three (abandoned) schools: Al-Rama, Al-Ibra and Al-Mouanseh schools. The schools were initially not well-equipped (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) to receive large numbers of people but have improved and are regularly monitored. The hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque has also been rehabilitated to host displaced families should there be a need in the future.

UNHCR and the Government of Lebanon initiated the renovation of Al Rama, Al Mouanseh, and Kashlak schools, and the hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque, while the renovation of the Al Ibra school was undertaken by the Al-Bashaer Islamic Association.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) together with partner organizations and outreach workers identified host family residences in pressing need of improvement in preparation for the winter. Through this assessment, NRC provided 90 families with coupons that enabled them to renovate their homes, providing better living conditions for both the local and displaced communities.

Distribution (Food/ NFI)

UNHCR along with the Government of Lebanon, DRC, Caritas Migrant Centre, World Vision, and UNICEF distribute food and non-food items to the displaced on a monthly basis. UNHCR continues to provide food and non-food items to newly registered families who were not on the UNHCR-HRC database during the last distribution.

Items Distributed	February 8th, 2012	Cumulative
Mattresses	0	4,589
Blankets	0	4,857
Food kits	36	5,949
Diapers	0	886
Baby milk	7	1,317
Baby kits	0	424
Hygiene kits	0	3,960
Women's underwear	0	714
Tuition fees	465	465
Books	465	465
Stationary	75	596
Uniforms	465	465
Family kit (kitchen utensils)	0	48
Clothes coupons of 75,000 LBP	185	1,516
Clothes by UNICEF	9	52
Toys by UNICEF	14	92
Fuel coupons of 20 litres	262	18,487

Education

The Minister of Education is facilitating the enrolment of displaced children in public schools. UNHCR is covering the cost of school fees, books, uniforms, notebooks, and stationary. UNHCR and its implementing partner, Save the Children Sweden (SCS), are providing remedial classes for the displaced Syrian children given the differences between the Lebanese and Syrian school curricula. A total of 465 displaced children have enrolled into public schools. UNHCR is seeking to improve the school enrolment rate in 2012 by continuing to give awareness sessions to displaced parents on the importance of education, and offering remedial classes to both Lebanese and displaced Syrian children in Wadi Khaled, Tall Bire, and Tripoli. UNICEF and SCS are supporting five Child Friendly Spaces in the area of Wadi Khaled where children can play. These spaces are located in public schools, shelters, and NGO centers. Teachers, social workers and community facilitators have been trained on how to manage recreational activities and integrate psycho-social support in dealing with children in these safe spaces.

Health

UNHCR, HRC and UNHCR's implementing partner International Medical Corps (IMC) have established a referral system so that registered displaced Syrians have access to health care services through the most specialized partner. Public Health Centres, Social Development Centres of the MoSA, and a few NGO-run health care centres in the region are providing primary health care and medication to the displaced. UNHCR covers the cost of doctor consultations for women and children and up to 85% of diagnostic tests for all displaced persons. The HRC covers the cost of secondary and tertiary health care through local hospitals in the north. UNHCR provides additional support where needed.

The HRC and IMC reached agreement with five hospitals for discounted rates in the provision of necessary health care. Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) started the implementation of a mental health project jointly with the Makassed Public Health Centre (PHC). A psychologist and a psychiatrist have been deployed to Makassed's centre to provide mental health counselling to all Wadi Khaled residents, including the displaced.

To date, there have been 281 patients administered into hospitals since September 19, mostly covered by HRC. In addition, there have been 903 patients who have received primary health care from different health centres and mobile medical units.

The World Health Organization together with UNHCR is liaising with MoPH, IMC, MSF and other partners to increase the provision of chronic medications and to improve the health referral mechanism and health information at the field level.

Capacity building

UNCHR has invested in strengthening the capacities of governments and local partners through:

- Regular coordination meetings and joint plans of action;
- Technical and material support to the HRC in regards to registration, data collection and verification;
- Training and guidance to HRC, MoSA, partners, medical, educational and social service providers in a wide range of areas including:
 - protection of refugees and internally displaced persons;
 - effective registration and monitoring practices;
 - psychological first aid and mental health;
 - remedial class management and positive discipline;
 - computer skills for local health service providers.
- Quick Impact Projects such as public gardens, public library and a cine club;
- Establishment of medical referral mechanisms and training for the systematic entry of data in the health referral system.