

Lebanon Update

Situation in North Lebanon

11 - 17 February 2012



A UNHCR field officer completes an application as she interviews Syrian refugees inside their house in the Wadi Khaled region, on the Syrian-Lebanese border, North Lebanon. © UNHCR Dalia Khamissy October 3, 2011

Highlights of the week

Numbers:

The number of displaced Syrians currently registered with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) is 6,522 persons. Since the previous week, there has been an increase of 389 registered persons, mainly in the Wadi Khaled, Akroom, Bire, Halba, Old Akkar and Tripoli areas.

Of the increase of 389 newly registered persons, 344 have arrived in Lebanon since 01 January 2012. The remaining newly registered persons arrived earlier but only this week registered with the UNHCR and HRC.

Distribution:

UNHCR and its partners continued preparations for the February distribution of food and non-food items, scheduled to take place at the end of the month. The HRC and UNHCR facilitate this distribution in cooperation with other partners, most notably, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). UNICEF will provide hygiene kits for newly registered persons and Islamic Relief will provide baby kits.

Health:

The Field Health Coordination group met this week. Co-chaired by UNHCR and its implementing partner, International Medical Corps (IMC), the meeting includes all those involved in the provision of health services including HRC, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the

Protection and Security:

Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) maintained their heightened presence in the Akroom Mountain and Wadi Khaled areas. According to the authorities the increased LAF presence is to monitor the security situation and prevent the smuggling of weapons across the border. Displaced Syrians and local Lebanese community leaders informed UNHCR and its partners that they welcomed the deployment of these additional troops as a means of ensuring greater security in these areas.

On 10 February, clashes took place between rival political groups in the Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen areas of Tripoli. The LAF diffused the situation.

During the week, 17 wounded Syrians were admitted to Lebanese hospitals in the North. The HRC covered the costs of their hospitalization.

Registration certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC remain on hold and circulation permits have yet to be issued. Displaced Syrians in the North continue to feel frustrated by their lack of mobility and consequent inability to find temporary work.

International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), and the coalition of associations in the North.

The group is progressing on its work plan to improve health services to Syrians and local populations, prioritizing services related to reproductive health, prevention and response to gender-based violence, and health education.

Education:

Save the Children Sweden (SCS) continued its efforts to improve public school enrollment and attendance. While enrollment to remedial classes increased slightly this week, attendance fell by 40%. Families reported to SCS that they had not sent their children to school because they had security concerns. On account of the security situation, SCS temporarily scaled back its recreational activities in the child friendly spaces.

SCS met with parents whose children were not in school - either because they had dropped out of school or had never enrolled. Many parents expressed interest in having their children enrolled in school, but highlighted the need for additional educational support. MoSA, DRC and SCS are following-up to ensure that the needed support is provided.

Shelter:

The last phase of painting in the Rama collective shelter was completed. The physical enhancements have improved both the living conditions as well as the spirits of those living in the shelter.

Community Services:

Discussions with residents of several villages in Wadi Khaled about the creation of a new community center revealed strong support. Residents feel it will strengthen relations between community members. They also expressed particular interest in using such a centre for vocational training, health education sessions and continuous education sessions.

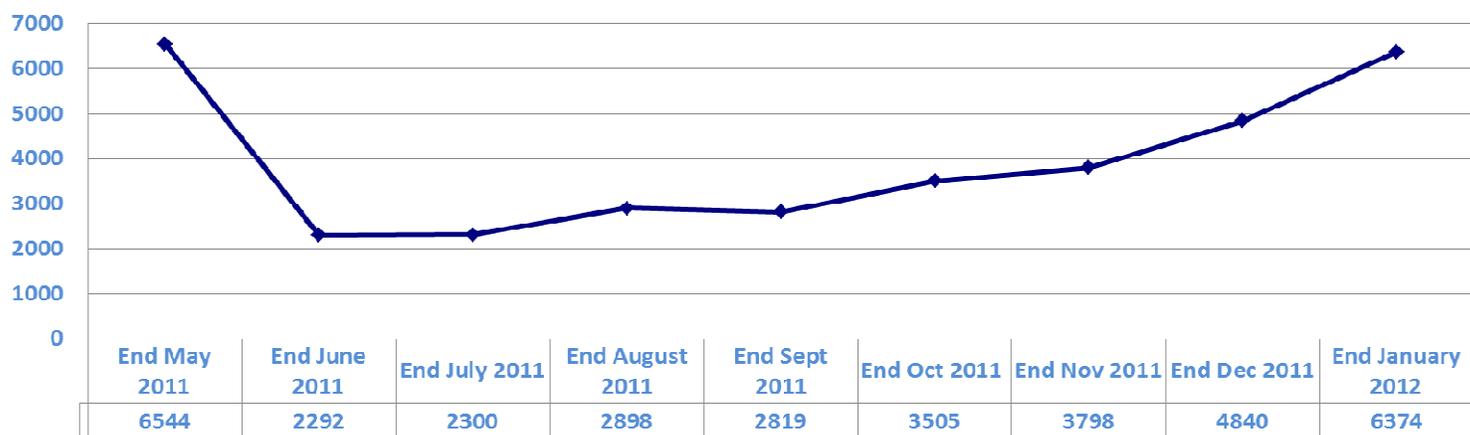
Situational Overview

Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 6,000 Syrians into North Lebanon. Many subsequently returned to Syria, while others relocated within Lebanon. Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC have registered and assisted over 11,000 persons.

Currently there are 6,522 persons (1,256 households) registered in the North, residing mostly with host families in difficult circumstances. 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.

Since 01 January 2012, UNHCR and HRC have registered 1871 displaced Syrians. Of these new registrations, 26% arrived on or after 01 January 2012. Local mayors and NGOs played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

Total Registered Displaced Syrians (per month)



Age Group	Females	Percentage	Males	Percentage	Total	Percentage
0-04	526	20%	630	24%	1156	22%
05-11	616	24%	620	23%	1236	24%
12-17	466	18%	493	19%	959	18%
18-29	685	26%	611	23%	1296	25%
30-39	432	17%	392	15%	824	16%
40-49	255	10%	267	10%	522	10%
50-59	113	4%	120	5%	233	4%
60+	69	3%	52	2%	121	2%
Total	3162	50%	3185	50%	6347	100%

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.

Trends	1st Week Feb	2nd Week Feb
Newly Registered	50	214
Deactivated	0	0
Internally Moving	95	0
Returned to Syria	34	0
Absent during Distribution	162	0
Active Population	6133	6347

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.

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

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 14th, 2012	Cumulative
Mattresses	0	4,589
Blankets	0	4,857
Food kits	0	5,949
Diapers	0	886
Baby milk	0	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
Kitchen utensils	0	48
Clothes coupons of 75,000 LBP	0	1,516
Clothes by Unicef	0	52
Toys by Unicef	0	92
Fuel coupons of 20 litres	0	18,487
Educational kits - remedial classes	23	23

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 centres. 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.

Since 19 September 2011, there have been 409 hospital admissions for 314 patients, 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 number of patients who receive primary health care is updated on a monthly basis).

WHO 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.