



Lebanon Update

Support to Displaced Syrians

16 March - 23 March 2012



A Syrian student concentrates on the board during an Arabic language class at the Lebanese school he is attending in Wadi Khaled. © UNHCR – Dalia Khamissy – October 2011

Highlights of the week

Numbers

The number of displaced Syrians currently registered with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) in north Lebanon is 8,148 persons.

In the Bekaa, there are according to UNHCR and partners approximately 5,000 Syrian displaced, including 730 families in Central and West Bekaa and 450 families in North Bekaa. The number of people arriving on a daily basis continues to increase and efforts to verify the numbers and locations are undertaken on a daily basis.

Protection and Security

Border towns in the North and the Bekaa experienced gunfire from the Syrian side. In the Bekaa, mortar shells were fired into al Joura in Masharie al Qaa. In north Lebanon, security sources reported said that four percussion bombs landed in the village of Buqaya in Wadi Khaled in addition to gunfire and shelling in Akkar. Both areas are now calm.

This week 27 wounded Syrians were admitted to hospitals.

Assistance in North Lebanon

Distribution

UNHCR and its implementing partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) continued distributing food and non-food items to all registered displaced Syrians in north Lebanon.

UNHCR and DRC finalized the distribution schedule of food and hygiene kits to yet to be registered refugees in Tripoli – A distribution begins this Saturday facilitated by UNHCR, DRC and the Al Bachaer organization, for some 2000 individuals.

Shelter

UNHCR, working with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and partners updated the electrical system capacity in all three collective shelters. In addition, the Rama and Mounseh shelters received more cooking stoves to accommodate recently arrived families.

Solar water heaters were installed in the Freidis shelter replacing the traditional electrical water boiler; this is a test run to see if this new form of heat can save energy and money while effectively heating shelters for the displaced.

Education

There is an increase of 38 students enrolled in remedial classes bringing the total number to 473 children, 25% of whom are Lebanese children. This is due in large part to outreach efforts by UNHCR and partners who are targeting the new arrivals of displaced Syrians, as well as children in remote villages, and stressing the importance of continuing education.

Mobile recreational activities began reaching children in Bire and surrounding villages. Facilitated by UNHCR's partner, Save the Children Sweden (SCS), mobile activities bring games and to children in areas that are not equipped with child friendly spaces. SCS social workers also make door-to-door visits during mobile activity trips to continue follow-up on the learning progress of Syrian children and to encourage enrollment in classes.

Health

The HRC will not be interrupting their coverage of secondary health care fees in the North. This is positive news as wounded Syrians continue to enter Lebanon.

The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) held a seminar educating local nurses and surgeons on different methods of treating war injuries such as wounds from bullets and fractures.

HRC receives funding for assistance

The HRC received approval on additional funding to continue assistance to displaced Syrians in the North this week averting the feared March 23 shutdown.

Assistance in other parts of Lebanon

Distribution

UNHCR and partners provided food and hygiene kits, diapers and clothing to over 200 families (some 1000 persons) in the Bekaa. Distribution was facilitated by local partners helping to strengthen the community's capacity efforts. UNHCR continues to conduct home visits to ensure needs are met. .

Coordination

Inter-agency coordination meetings in the Bekaa are ensuring that distribution and outreach efforts are coordinated . UNHCR is currently working to establish a solid mechanism enabling distribution teams to reach out to all displaced Syrians in the area..

Shelter

Shelter is one of the most pressing concerns for new families arriving to the Bekaa. DRC deployed two shelter experts to the region who identified three spaces with potential for collective shelter: a farm in Saadnayel, a school in Marj al Zohour and another school in Kfarzines. These three shelters have the potential of hosting up to 50 families.

Additionally, efforts are underway to renovate unfinished houses in Aarsal and Masharie al Qaa that can serve as temporary housing while more sustainable shelters are rehabilitated. UNHCR provided basic shelter materials for these houses.

The Norwegian Refugee Council has started the rehabilitation of 100 dwellings in Bekaa (80 in Aarsal and 20 in Sadanayel) as well as 18 mosques in Aarsal.

Education

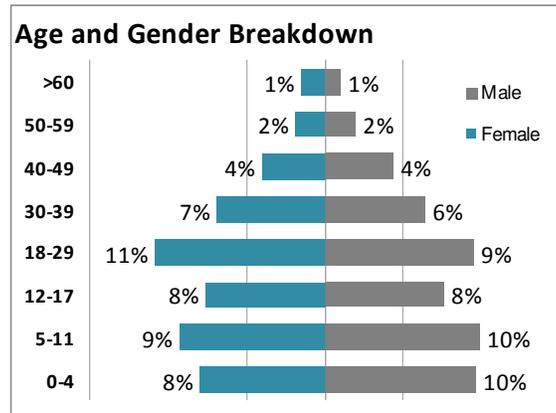
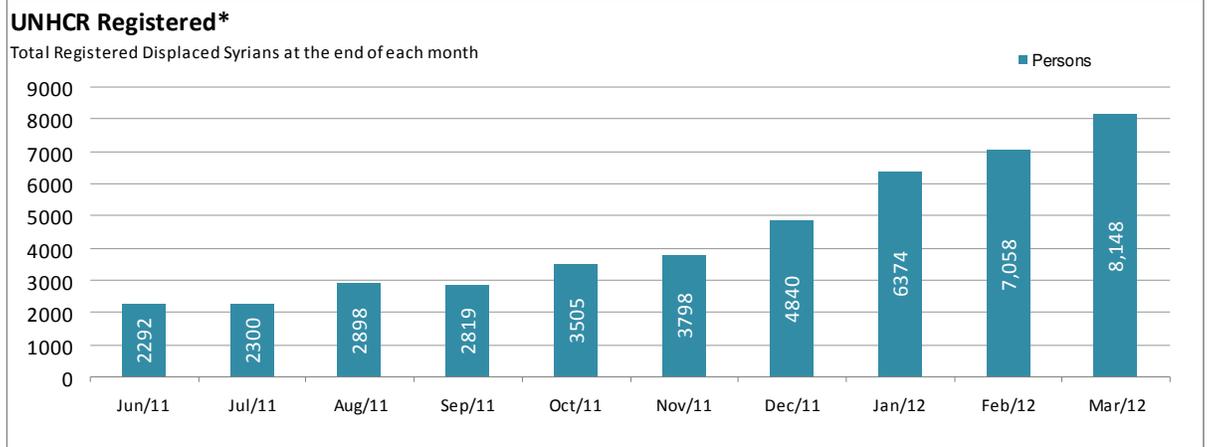
Preliminary education assessments reveal that the majority of refugee children in

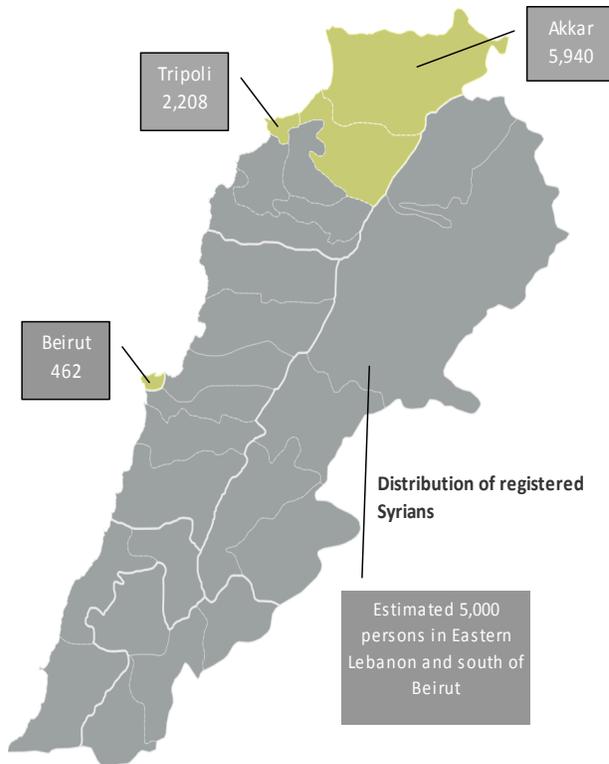
the Bekaa are not enrolled in school. Many were not enrolled in schools in Syria prior to entering Lebanon but have expressed the desire and intention of resuming their studies. UNHCR and partners are identifying public schools with both French and English curriculums in the areas where the displaced are with the hopes of enrolling students mid-year. Moreover, plans for remedial and accelerated learning classes are in the works to facilitate enrollment and assist Syrian children for the upcoming school year.

Health

UNHCR's implementing partner, IMC signed agreements with primary health care centers in Taanayel, Baalbeck and Aarsal; the centers are receiving approximately 40 patients per day for care and diagnostic services. Chronic medication is also now available through these centers. Since March 15, IMC followed-up on the 9 cases of emergency admissions.

Situational Overview





Many individuals and families have been deeply affected by the events that caused them to leave and are reluctant to return home until the situation stabilizes.

Protection

The vast majority of Syrians registered with the HRC and UNHCR have come from Tal Kalakh and Homs. The majority of displaced Syrians in the Bekaa region have come from Baba Amr in Homs and Al Qusayr, south of Homs.

The majority of those who have arrived in recent months to north Lebanon have crossed at official border crossings expressing fear of going through the unofficial ones. They also express concern of the reported presence of landmines on the Syrian side of the border. In the Bekaa, the majority of the displaced have crossed through the porous unofficial eastern border crossings.

UNHCR maintains regular contact with the Lebanese authorities and civil society representatives to follow-up on the security situation of the displaced populations.

Since the outset last April, the Lebanese government has taken a humanitarian approach allowing displaced Syrians to enter Lebanon. There have been very few cases of arrests of illegal entry/stay in the past many months. In all cases, persons were released upon UNHCR's interventions.

The movement of Syrians who entered Lebanon at unofficial border crossings in the North is still limited within north Lebanon.

Records reveal that 334 wounded Syrians have been treated in various hospitals in Lebanon since September. 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.

Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 7,000 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 in the north.

Currently there are 8,148 persons in the north. Local mayors and NGOs have played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

There are also concentrations of displaced Syrians residing in east Lebanon. UNHCR's latest estimates with partners indicate that there are over 5,000 persons in need in the Bekaa.

There are approximately 1000 more receiving assistance from UNHCR and partners in other parts of Lebanon. Syrians who have entered Lebanon reside mostly with host families in difficult circumstances. In north Lebanon, some 200 live in collective centres that have been renovated by UNHCR and partners.

Assistance

Outside of North Lebanon where the HRC is not operational, refugees are assisted by local NGOs, municipalities, and other partners. UNHCR is expanding its efforts to meet humanitarian needs of these communities.

In north Lebanon, 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 in the North. 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. UNHCR is currently expanding its operation in order to reach out to more displaced families in Tripoli.

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. A comprehensive referral mechanism to respond to survivors of violence has been established among key stakeholders for identified cases.

Shelter Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. Just over 200 persons are accommodated in three (abandoned) schools in the North -Al-Rama, Al-Ibra and Al-Mouanseh schools- and few families are currently accommodated in a mosque in Aarsal. The three above-mentioned schools were initially not well-equipped (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) to receive large numbers of people but have improved and are regularly monitored. Basic renovation of a fourth abandoned school in Halba, the Freidis school, is underway. 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 HRC 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 in both north Lebanon and the Bekaa. Through this assessment, NRC provided 90 families with coupons that enabled them to renovate their homes in the North, allowing for better living conditions for both the local and displaced communities. NRC is currently in the process of planning for the potential continuation of this project in the Bekaa.

Distribution (Food/ NFI) In north Lebanon, UNHCR along with the HRC, 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. Distribution in the Bekaa is facilitated through local partners.

North Lebanon - March 22nd

Items Distributed	March 22 nd , 2012	Cumulative
Mattresses	0	4,613
Blankets	0	4,857
Food kits	0	7,204
Diapers	0	1,028
Baby milk	0	1,478
Hygiene kits	0	5,198
Hygiene kits by UNICEF for newly comers	0	99
Garments for children by UNICEF	0	238
Women Pads (private donation)	0	108
Torches by UNICEF	0	650
Fuel coupons of 20 liters	0	25,717
Fuel coupons of 20 liters for hosting families	0	164

Bekaa – March 22nd

Items Distributed	March 22th, 2012	Cumulative
Mattresses	101	897
Blankets	364	2,000
Food kits	55	300
Food kit private donation	0	88
Hygiene kits by UNICEF for newly comers	255	468
Clothes (private donation)	33 pack	33 pack
Jerry cans of 10 liters	250	1,000
Fuel coupons of 20 liters	908	4,376
Baby diapers (private donation)	100	100

Education

A total of 525 displaced children are currently enrolled in public schools in the North. However, the school enrolment rate in Lebanon is 53% at the primary school level (6-11 year old) and as little as 9% at secondary school level (12-17 year old). Reasons vary between the different age groups.

The main reasons for low retention among primary school-aged children include: late registration, denial of access by some school administrators, unease over their circumstances and anxiety concerning of the different curriculum. Very low secondary school enrolment is largely due to cultural practices and specifically the expectation that boys from the age of 13 years are expected to work and girls from that age are encouraged to get married.

In the Bekaa, displaced Syrian children are not enrolled in schools due to their late arrival to Lebanon in the school year. UNHCR and partners are conducting detailed education assessments with a view to expand education programmes in the Bekaa.

UNHCR is seeking to improve the school enrolment rate and attendance to remedial classes through provision of awareness sessions and remedial classes. UNHCR is also coordinating with other specialized actors such as Save the Children, UNESCO, UNICEF and others to better address this issue.

Health UNHCR, HRC and UNHCR's implementing partner International Medical Corps (IMC) have established a referral system so that registered displaced Syrians in the North have access to health care services through the most specialized partner.

Primary Healthcare

Primary Health Care 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 full cost for doctor consultations and diagnostic tests for women and children and up to 85% of diagnostic tests for all displaced persons. Since September 2011, there have been 986 patients who have received primary health care from different health centres and mobile medical units in North Lebanon.

In the Bekaa, vaccination is being provided to all persons in need including displaced Syrians through national channels. UNHCR and IMC have signed agreements with primary health care centers in Taanayel, Baalbeck and Aarsal to provide doctor consultations, medications including chronics, and diagnostic services to all displaced Syrians.

Secondary Healthcare

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 agreements with five hospitals for discounted rates in the provision of necessary health care. Since September 2011, there have been 455 hospital admissions, mostly covered by HRC.

WHO and UNHCR are 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.

In the Bekaa, UNHCR will cover the cost of hospital care at three local hospitals through its implementing partner IMC. The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) is covering the hospitalization cost of all wounded displaced pending their transfer to North Lebanon for complete treatment. Other cases in need of hospitalization will continue to be covered by the HRC if transferred to North Lebanon.

Mental Healthcare

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.

In the Bekaa, MSF Switzerland started a mental health programme. In the absence of HRC's involvement, UNHCR with its implementing partner IMC will contribute to covering health care services for displaced Syrians. Referral hospitals are being

identified.

**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.