

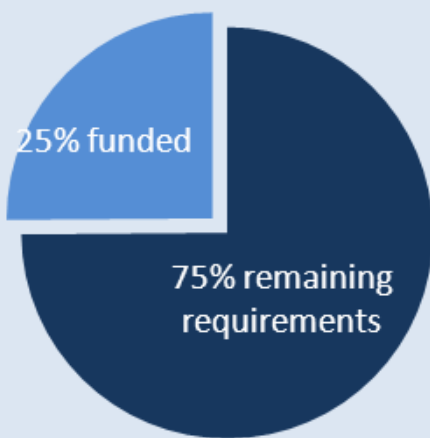
### Key figures

**945,461** individuals registered or pending registration

**36%** persons with specific needs

### Funding

UNHCR requirements 2014: USD 468 m



Protection requirements: USD 106 m

### February developments

#### Access to territory and timely registration

- Between 9 and 25 February, some 13,440 refugees from Syria crossed the border into Arsal. 13% settled beyond the Lebanese Army checkpoint, where humanitarian actors do not have access.
- Approximately 49,500 Syrian refugees were registered in February, a 5% decrease from January, mainly due to February being a shorter month.
- The waiting time for registration decreased to 22 days. This continues to be the lowest average in more than a year and is well within the 30-day standard.
- Over 29,000 refugees approached UNHCR for verification and renewal of their registration certificate. This number constitutes a 21% increase from January.
- 37% of refugees surveyed during the renewal-verification process in February were found to have expired residency permits.

#### Protection violations prevented, monitored and addressed

- Protection monitoring partners IRC and Mercy Corps monitored 805 individuals in 82 different locations. Protection issues identified continue to relate to legal status and the costs of renewing the residency permits as well as children out of school.

#### Access to legal services and civil status documentation enhanced

- 22 individuals were referred to UNHCR, for having been arrested solely for their illegal entry/stay in Lebanon.
- 91 individuals were counselled during 5 detention visits.
- 963 persons were provided legal counselling by UNHCR and partners. The priority issues continued to be regularization of legal status.
- 21 persons were assisted with legal representation before the courts on matters of personal status, including custody documents.



#### Durable and humanitarian solutions made available

- 119 cases of 422 persons were submitted to resettlement countries for resettlement and the HAP.
- 245 refugees left for Germany under the eighth HAP departure.
- A Norwegian mission arrived in Lebanon to interview 332 Syrian refugees for possible resettlement, as part of their 2014 quota.
- A French mission visited Beirut to prepare for a HAP which aims to select 150-200 Syrians refugees for admission to France.
- 669 Syrian refugees were interviewed for resettlement and 320 Syrian nationals were assessed for refugee status in Tripoli, Zahle and Tyre.



New arrivals being identified in Arsal

## Achievements: January - February

Activity	 reached January- February	 2014 Target
Persons interviewed at the border	1,010	8,000
Persons registered (or pending registration)	101,500	600,000
Protection monitoring visits	998	2,400
Legal counseling	1,640	4,500
Detention visits	164	700
Persons submitted for HAP and resettlement	802	6,250
Departures (HAP and resettlement)	967	2,700

## Needs

Refugees fleeing violence in Syria often undertake perilous journeys through conflict-affected areas and are forced to resort to unofficial border crossings. Upon arrival in Lebanon, prompt registration and documentation remain priority needs to ensure access to services, relief assistance, identification of specific needs and protection interventions.

Refugees who entered through unofficial border crossings or who are unable to renew their residency are not recognized as legally present in Lebanon. The consequences of irregular legal status can be vast, not least relating to risks of arrest and detention, severe limitations on freedom of movement, limited access to livelihoods/employment, risks of exploitation, civil registration and problematic access to essential services, including birth registration.

Physical safety remains an issue of concern, particularly in communities affected at times by shelling or shootings from Syria. Refugees and members of the host community have been exposed to threats, physical

mistreatment retaliatory actions, evictions, secondary displacements and other protection incidents. Lack of legal representation, awareness and irregular legal status complicate access to justice and remedies for these and other rights violations.

## Challenges

### Lack of legal or administrative refugee framework:

Lebanon is not a state party to the 1951 Convention or to its 1967 Protocol nor does it have specific legislation or administrative practices for refugees and asylum-seekers. As such, refugees lack safeguards beyond the domestic law applying to other foreigners.

### Irregular legal status:

An average of 12% of registered refugees entering through unofficial border crossings and are not recognized as legally present in Lebanon. In addition, the vast majority of refugees are unable to pay the often cost prohibitive residency renewal fees at the expiry of 12 months. Without a policy change, the number of refugees in an irregular legal status may grow exponentially into the hundreds of thousands in 2014.

### Dispersed refugee population:

Refugees live in over 1,600 different locations, in Lebanon making protection monitoring and information dissemination critical to address protection incidents and ensure access to registration and essential services. Restrictions on freedom of movement due to security checkpoints, curfews, distance and lack of documentation also present serious challenges.

### Lack of civil status documentation:

Many refugees lack civil status documentation. Worn out documentation can cause delays or rejections at the border, and sometimes, separation of family members. Lack of documents can create obstacles for refugees in accessing basic services like healthcare and education, and in obtaining other critical documentation, such as birth registration. The inability to register births may put refugees at a heightened risk of statelessness and increase vulnerability of individuals to exploitation and trafficking.

### Physical safety and security and limited access to justice:

The overall security situation in in locations such as the Bekaa and northern Akkar, conflict-prone neighborhoods in Tripoli, and tensions in villages throughout Lebanon, places the physical safety of refugees at risk of violence and physical safety. Solutions remain limited due to the lack of shelter or relocation alternatives as well as lack of access to justice, particularly for those considered irregularly present in Lebanon.

## Strategy

UNHCR's protection strategy addresses key challenges and priority concerns of refugees including:

- Ensuring access to territory and reducing the risk of *refoulement*
- Ensuring timely registration and adequate reception conditions
- Preventing, monitoring and addressing protection violations
- Providing access to legal services and civil status documentation to ensure the rights of refugees are respected
- Ensuring durable and humanitarian solutions are made available.

## UNHCR implementing partners

Association Justice and Misericorde (AJEM), Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CMLC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Relief and Development (IRD), International Rescue Committee (IRC), INTERSOS, Makhzoumi Foundation, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam, Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention For Local Development (SHEILD), Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA).