

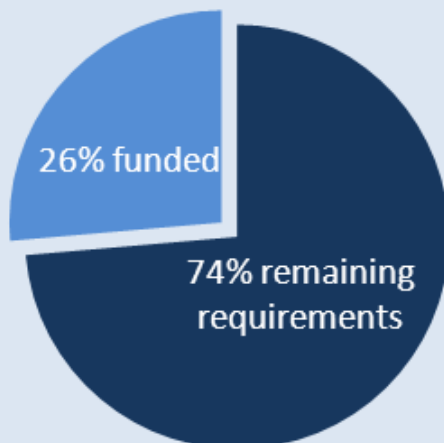
Key figures

993,689 individuals registered or pending registration

36% persons with specific needs

Funding

UNHCR requirements 2014: USD 468 m



Protection requirements: USD 106 m



Syrian refugees await registration at the UNHCR compound in Tripoli. Work starts at 7.30 in the morning; 1,500 refugees are registered (or re-registered) here every day @ UNHCR / L. Addario

March developments

Access to territory and timely registration

- While the border remained calm, refugees still report some obstacles to entry, including from armed elements in Syria and difficulties re-entering Lebanon after returning to Syria to renew residency permits, resulting at times in family separation.
- Approximately 48,700 Syrian refugees were registered in March, a minor 2% decrease from February. A mobile registration mission was conducted in Wadi Khalid to reach refugees in remote locations. The average waiting time for registration decreased to 20 days from 22 days at the end of February.
- Over 51,000 refugees approached UNHCR for verification and renewal of their registration certificate. 34% of refugees surveyed were found to lack or have expired residency permits.

Protection violations prevented, monitored and addressed

- Protection monitoring partners IRC, Mercy Corps and Intersos monitored 986 individuals in 184 different locations. Protection monitors noticed a high number of refugees relocating within Lebanon in search for better and affordable access to services and livelihoods. Eviction threats and related refugee fears continued, with notable incidents in the Bekaa and Tripoli areas. Information campaigns, counseling and follow up actions were undertaken.
- A UNHCR survey found that only 10% of Syrian refugees had a written rent agreement in Lebanon. 56% of refugees reported their homes damaged or not inhabitable in Syria.



Access to legal services and civil status documentation enhanced

- In March, 60 Syrians arrested solely for their illegal entry/stay in Lebanon were reported to UNHCR for intervention, as compared to only 22 in February.
- 193 individuals were counselled during 27 detention monitoring visits conducted by UNHCR and partners.
- 982 persons were provided legal counselling by UNHCR and partners and 44 persons with legal representation before the courts on matters of personal status, including custody documents.

Durable and humanitarian solutions made available

- 655 refugees were submitted to resettlement countries for resettlement and humanitarian admission in March, the highest numbers since resettlement of Syrians began last year. Meanwhile, 502 refugees departed for Germany with the ninth and tenth HAP departure flights.
- Since flights from Damascus airport ceased in February 2013, a resettlement transit operation has assisted more than 6,000 refugees from Damascus to transit through Beirut on their way to resettlement countries.
- Four refugee status determination missions were conducted in Qobayat, Tripoli, Tyre and Zahle to conduct interviews with 21 cases and 100 individuals in addition to 71 cases and 140 individuals in the Mt. Lebanon area.

Achievements: January - March

Activity	 reached January-March	 2014 Target
Persons interviewed at the border	1,689	8,000
Persons registered (or pending registration)	151,000	600,000
Protection monitoring visits	1,984	10,800
Legal counseling	2,622	11,400
Detention visits	357	3,000
Persons submitted for HAP and resettlement	1,466	6,250
Departures (HAP and resettlement)	1,637	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 close to 1,700 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).