

SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON: A CONSTANT STRUGGLE FOR

May 23, 2014



#FutureOfSyria

LEBANON

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK

- 465,000 individuals supported through weatherproofing of unfinished houses, garages, work sites and in informal settlements and small collective shelter rehabilitated;
- Over US\$ 50 million dollars has been injected into the local economy through the procurement of construction materials;
- 81% of refugees pay rent for shelter at an average of US\$ 200 a month;
- An estimated US\$ 34 million is injected into the local economy monthly through refugee rental payments;
- 15,000 refugees continue to be hosted by Lebanese families.

UNHCR conducted a shelter survey in March 2014 to assess the refugee shelter conditions in Lebanon. The survey is based on 6,000 interviews conducted. This update reveals many of the survey findings and reviews key issues in relation to the shelter response.

One of the most telling findings in the survey is that most refugees (81%) rent accommodation. Of these 57% live in apartments which they often share with other displaced families. Forty percent of refugees live in insecure dwellings with 25% in unfinished buildings, garages, warehouses, animal sheds and 15% in informal settlements.

Four years into the Syrian crisis over 15,000 refugees remain accommodated with Lebanese families.

TYPES OF ACCOMODATION

Fifty seven per cent of refugees who rent apartments often share small basic lodgings with other refugee families in overcrowded conditions.

Hoda's story



Hoda, a 28 year-old refugee from Aleppo, fled the war ravaging Syria one year ago with her family five children and husband.

This report is produced by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) on behalf of humanitarian agencies working on the Syrian refugee response in Lebanon. The report is based on information provided by UNHCR and partner agencies. For more information, please contact Dana Sleiman at sleiman@unhcr.org or Joelle Eid at eidj@unhcr.org.

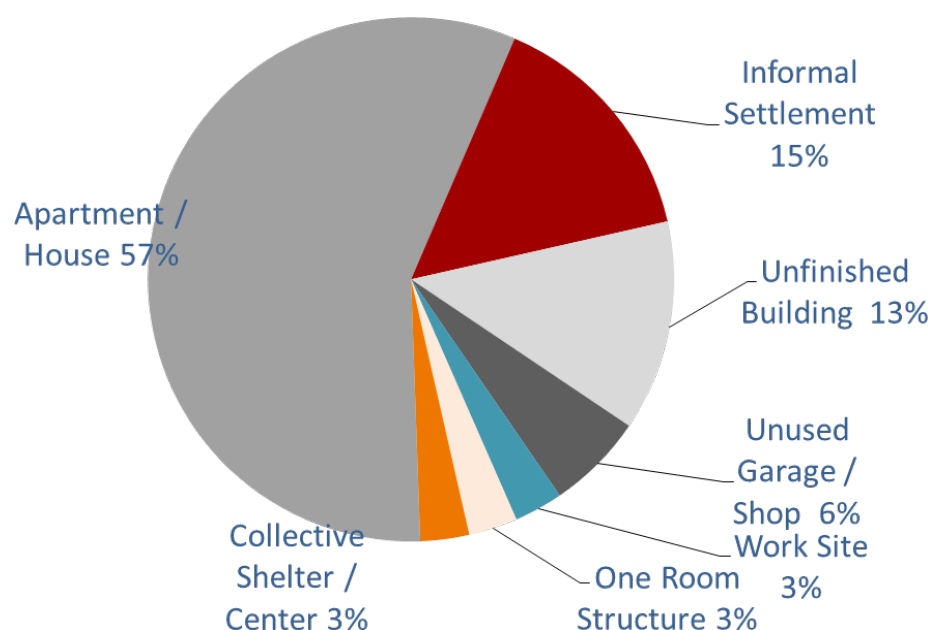
Hoda, a refugee mother from Halab, stands in the room she shares with her family at a collective shelter in south Lebanon ©UNHCR/A.McConnel/J.Eid

57% of refugees pay rent for accommodation they often share with other displaced families

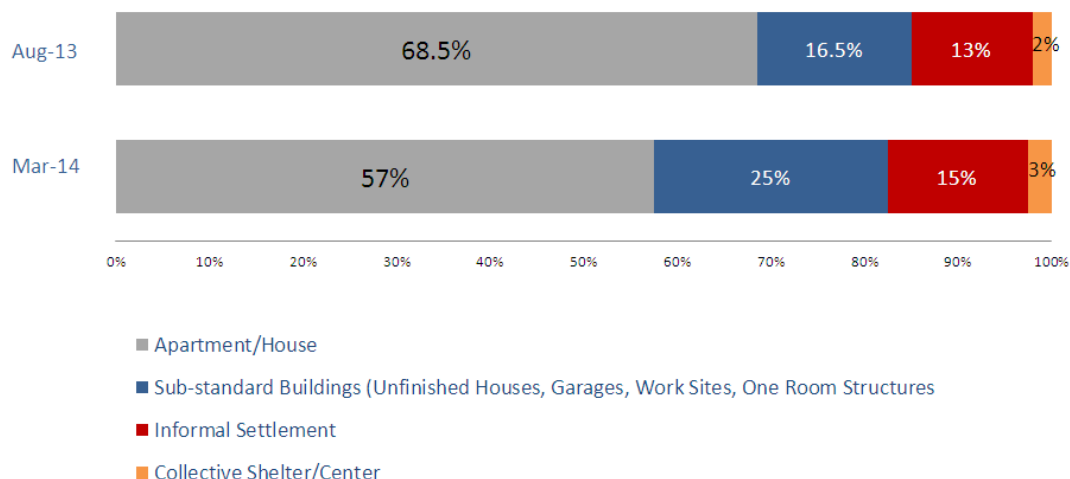
Hoda, a 28 year-old mother of five, lives in a collective shelter in south Lebanon hosting 36 other refugee families. "I lost my privacy the moment I left my country", she says.

Once in Lebanon, the family made its way to “Ras El-Ein”, a village in south Lebanon and settled in a collective shelter that today hosts some 36 families from Syria. Like most families in the shelter, Hoda’s family pays around 70 USD per month in exchange for a small room. They also work in a nearby field earning a little over 7 USD a day, barely enough to cover the rent and food expenses every month. “I lost my privacy the moment I left my country,” Hoda says while she desolately recalls the house she shared with her husband for ten years. “There is nothing more important than one’s own home, but we are grateful we have a place to stay,” she adds.

40% of refugees live in rented substandard shelters, 25% of which are garages, work sites, etc.

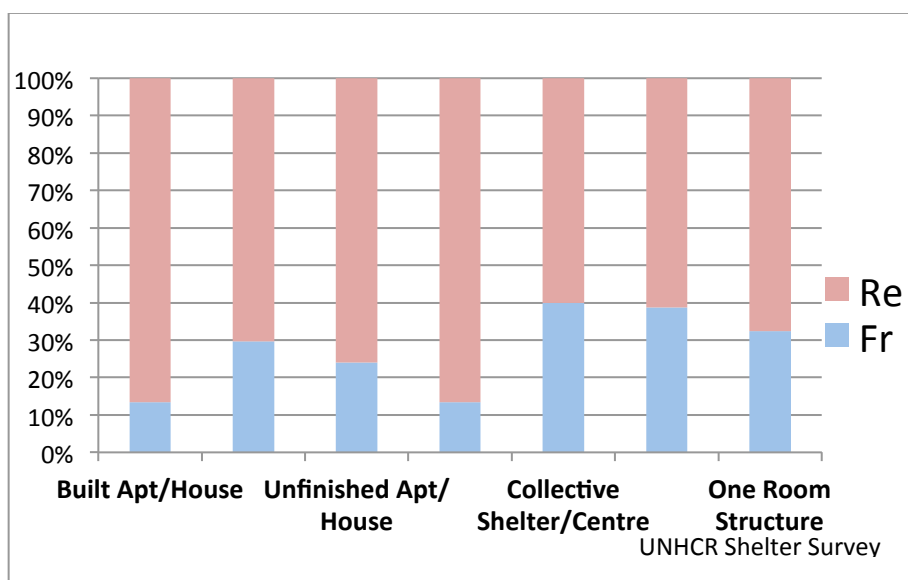


Over 40% of refugees live in rented substandard shelters. These include unfinished buildings, garages, work sites, and informal settlements. Of those, 15% live in tented settlements; while the remaining 25% live in garages, work sites, etc. This compares with 13% of refugees living in tented settlements and 16.5% in other substandard shelters in August 2013.



Refugees living in those substandard shelters are subject to hazardous conditions with limited access to water and hygiene facilities, and are often experiencing overcrowding and harsh weather conditions. This has led to a significant increase in the need for targeted healthcare and protection from the weather elements.

MOST REFUGEES PAY RENT



Eighty-one per cent of registered refugees pay an average of US\$200/month rent, whether in apartments or in any other type of accommodation including substandard shelters.

81% of registered refugees pay an average of US\$200/month

465,000 weatherproofing of unfinished houses, garages, work sites and informal settlements as well as rehabilitations of small collective shelter have been

An estimated US\$ 34 million is injected into the Lebanese economy monthly through refugee rental payments

Over US\$ 50 million have been injected into the local economy through local procurement of construction material

A MULTI-FACETED SHELTER RESPONSE

Refugees in Lebanon live in over 1,600 locations. Refugees are faced with serious constraints in finding secure accommodation. Humanitarian agencies work in a number of ways to meet needs on the ground.

Priority is given to those who live in insecure dwellings, where 40% of the refugee population live. Support is provided to weatherproof unfinished houses, garages, work sites, and informal settlements, as well as to rehabilitate small shelter units and collective centers. Over 465,000 such interventions have been implemented across Lebanon through a host of agencies since the beginning of the crisis.

In addition, agencies pursue a number of other interventions aimed as well as delivery benefits to Lebanese. These include:

- The rehabilitation of Lebanese homes in exchange for providing accommodation to refugees. Over 7,200 such houses have been rehabilitated so far.
- The identification and rehabilitation of private and public buildings to serve as collective shelters for refugees. Over 140 such buildings have been rehabilitated so far.
- The procurement of shelter and construction materials at local markets. Agencies have spent over US\$ 50 million in the local market including procurement of materials and rent subsidies since November 2012.

A Lebanese woman hosting a Syrian refugee



Hiba, a refugee child from Aleppo, is busy hurries to finish her school assignment while her mother (right) and Lebanese host (left) drink their afternoon coffee in south Lebanon
©UNHCR/N.Jaafar

15,000 refugees remain accommodated with Lebanese families

Em Bahij, a Lebanese mother of five, had once been in Zainab's shoes. Zainab, is a Syrian mother who fled Aleppo a little over a year ago to seek refuge in South Lebanon. Em Bahij, remembered her flight in fear in Aleppo and having experienced the feeling of displacement herself, embraced Zainab and her family. They now live in a small house 20 meters away from Em Bahji in Chaitieh village. Zainab says she is overwhelmed by the generosity of her Lebanese hosts and feels at home. Though Em Bahij had received generous offers for rent, she consistently turned them down with the intention of demolishing the unused house for good. But soon after the arrival of Zainab's family, she changed her mind. "Every member of this household is like family to me; Zainab and I have coffee every morning on my balcony."

A field worker's perspective



*“We find many families living in garages with three or four other families paying up to US\$300 per family while lacking basic facilities”,
Mohammed, a humanitarian worker with Solidar Suisse*

Mohammed, a humanitarian worker with Solidar Suisse, conducts a technical assessment on possible shelter options for refugees in south Lebanon ©SolidarSuisse

Mohammed Doukhi has been working as a Technical Officer with Solidar Suisse since November 2013. In his role with Solidar, he is mainly involved in the distribution of sealing-off kits and the rehabilitation of unfinished buildings to provide refugees in Nabatieh and Jezzine with secure shelter.

“In Jezzine, we find many families living in garages with three or four other families, paying up to US\$300 per family while lacking basic facilities,” he says. “They want to move to urban areas because there are more work opportunities, but the rents in those areas are much higher and consequently they are forced to live in bad conditions,” he adds.

Agencies and the Government of Lebanon requested US\$1.89 billion in the latest inter-agency funding appeal. US\$284 million have so far been received – 15 per cent, as of 14 April.

DONORS

USA, Kuwait, EU, Japan, UK, Germany, Australia, Norway, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Russia, France, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, Italy, Ireland, Austria, Republic of Korea, Spain, Luxemburg, Estonia, Czech Republic, Iceland, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Chile, Mexico, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Qatar, and Slovakia.

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AGENCIES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT

