

LEBANON/SYRIA SITUATION

PROTECTION MONTHLY UPDATE

July 2014

JULY DEVELOPMENTS

Access to territory and timely registration

- With an exception of a noted spike in arrivals at Masnaa on 15 July, overall the situation at the official border points remained calm during the month of July probably due to Ramadan. UNHCR border monitoring teams did not observe changes in the border procedures as compared to previous months.
- 45,759 Syrian refugees were registered in July, an 8.1% increase from June. The average waiting time for registration decreased by six days to 22 days. Over 43,970 refugees approached UNHCR for verification and renewal of their registration certificates. 37% of refugees surveyed lacked or had expired residency permits, a 6% increase from June. A further 12% of the refugees surveyed had family members with valid and expired residency in the same household. To date, approximately 54,000 individuals have been inactivated through the renewal-verification exercise.
- Registration unit conducted a survey on socio-economic factors in July for about 2,000 households. 39% were unemployed for over 12 months in Syria before fleeing to Lebanon, 65% stated their standard of living in Lebanon deteriorated compared to Syria.

Protection violations prevented, monitored and addressed

- IRC, Mercy Corps, DRC and Intersos monitored 4,327 refugees in 206 locations and referred 113 persons with specific protection needs to case management partners.
- Eviction cases continue to be on the rise throughout the country. UNHCR and partners responded by providing financial assistance to a very limited number of families, and working to mediate with landlords.
- Increased control of documents and residency was noted at checkpoints. Growing community tensions were reported throughout the country.

Access to legal services and civil status documentation enhanced

- 250 arrested asylum seekers and refugees (96% Syrian nationals) were referred to UNHCR. 16% of the individuals were referred solely for reasons of illegal entry and stay.
- In July, 63 detention visits were carried out by UNHCR and partners, reaching 342 individuals. 153 individuals received legal counseling and 169 received medical and psychosocial support. At the end of July, 338 asylum seekers and refugees were detained in different prisons in Lebanon.
- 1,909 persons were provided with legal counseling by UNHCR and partners and 105 persons with legal representation before the courts on matters of personal status, including custody documents and marriage registration.
- 4,449 individuals received legal awareness sessions mainly on marriage and birth registration.

Durable solutions made available

- In July, 1,121 refugees were submitted to third countries for resettlement or humanitarian admission and 436 departed, including 249 to Germany. These are the highest submission numbers since the beginning of the year.

Needs

Refugees fleeing violence in Syria often undertake perilous journeys through conflict-affected areas. Some of them are forced to resort to unofficial border crossings. Upon arrival in Lebanon, prompt registration

and documentation remain priority to ensure access to services, relief assistance, and effective protection interventions.

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 domestic legal safeguards beyond those applying to foreigners.

Irregular legal status: An average of 13% of registered refugees have entered through unofficial border crossings and are not able to pay the prohibitive regularization fees. In addition, those who have entered through official crossings have difficulties meeting the residency renewal fees. UNHCR continues to advocate for the waiver of such fees.

Dispersed refugee population: Refugees live in over 1,700 different locations in Lebanon making protection monitoring and information dissemination challenging. Compounded upon this, restrictions on freedom of movement due to security checkpoints, curfews and lack of identification expose refugees to a myriad of vulnerabilities.

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 locations such as the Bekaa and northern Akkar, conflict-prone neighborhoods in Tripoli, and tensions in some villages, places the physical safety of refugees at risk of violence. 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, and
- Ensuring durable and humanitarian solutions are made available.

Achievements: January – June

Activity	reached Jan - Jul	2014 Target
Persons interviewed at the border	7,270	8,000
Persons registered (or pending registration)	335,974	600,000
Monitoring visits	17,248	50,000
Legal counseling	7,050	11,400
Detention visits	1,954	3,000
Persons submitted for HAP and resettlement*	4,149	8,400
Departures (HAP and resettlement)*	4,209	5,900

*Includes Syrian and cases of other nationalities

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Links: Inter-agency Information Sharing:

<http://data.unhcr.org/lebanon>

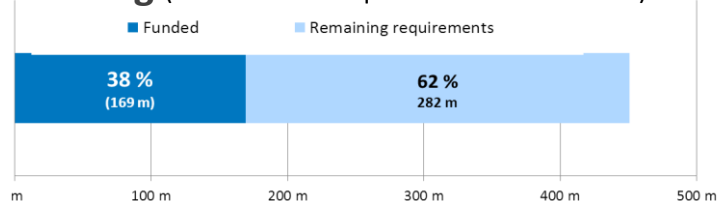


Disabled 11-years-old Syrian refugee, shares a tender moment with his Aunt in Ayroniye, Tripoli, Lebanon @ UNHCR, S. Baldwin

Key figures

- 1,138,874 individuals registered or pending registration
- 39% persons with specific needs

Funding (UNHCR total requirements: USD 451 m)



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).