

LEBANON/SYRIA SITUATION

CASH ASSISTANCE & CORE RELIEF ITEMS MONTHLY UPDATE

July 2014

JULY DEVELOPMENTS

Cash Assistance

- UNHCR transferred the last monetized hygiene and baby kits (hereby HK and BK) assistance to 41,162 refugee households. The last in-kind distribution of HK and BK had taken place in June. UNHCR has ended the provision of HK and BK as limited resources require a prioritization of assistance with the greatest impact.

Preparations for the Unconditional Cash Assistance Programme (UCAP):

- Using bio-data index available in UNHCR's database ProGres, 23,000 families were identified as extremely vulnerable and in need of cash assistance.
- Of the above, UNHCR is currently able to assist 7,000 families. These families were interviewed by UNHCR to confirm their presence in the country, verify their identity and update their data in ProGres.

Core Relief Items (CRIs)

- UNHCR along with Terre des Hommes - Italy distributed CRI newcomer kits to 250 families in Mount Lebanon. Kits contain mattresses, blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and jerry cans.



UNHCR staff assists refugee in using his cash card/UNHCR/S.Hoibak/2014

Needs

Cash Assistance: Refugee households throughout Lebanon are struggling to meet their basic needs as they lack access to income generating opportunities and as family resources and savings are dwindling. With most households relying on market provided goods and services and accommodation, financial support is critical for the survival of vulnerable families. As an alternative to in-kind assistance and distribution of core relief items, refugees frequently express a preference for financial assistance, which enables them to prioritize their needs and saves time and costs of travelling to distribution sites.

Challenges

Reduced livelihood opportunities: The UNHCR winterization baseline survey showed that only 22 per cent of interviewed households were able to generate an income. From those completely dependent on others, over 90% cited lack of work as the main problem. Medical conditions or disability were mentioned rarely. Without cash assistance these families are at risk of resorting to negative coping mechanisms or suffering from a further worsening of their living conditions.

High cost of living: The high cost of living in Lebanon has forced many households to move into substandard accommodation to reduce costs. The monthly cash assistance via ATM transfer is a contribution to the most vulnerable households to meet their essential needs to survive.

Dispersed refugee population: Refugees live in over 1,750 locations in Lebanon. This complicates conducting quality needs assessments and designing assistance according to requirements, gender and age household composition. It also hinders the distribution of in-kind CRIs and increases logistic costs.

Poor infrastructure, weather and insecurity: Given the dispersed refugee population and the large number of refugees, distribution of CRIs requires coordinated procurement, transportation, storage and distribution. Moreover, ATM machines are not available in Wadi Khaled and Aarsal. UNHCR is therefore providing assistance via fuel vouchers and in-kind stoves in these areas.

Security concerns: In some parts of the country, refugees face movement restrictions and poor access to markets and ATMs. UNHCR and partner agencies are reviewing options to address the needs of this group.

Strategy

UNHCR is moving towards the increased use of ATM cards for cash assistance, a process that started with the winterization programme. The use of ATM cards has a several key advantages:

- Given that refugees live in more than 1,750 locations across Lebanon, ATM cards provide a practical means for prompt delivery of cash assistance to refugees in the country.
- ATM cards empower refugees by providing a dignified means of receiving cash, saving time spent at or travelling to distribution sites.
- Cash cards enable UNHCR and partners to make the best use of available funds. They eliminate costs related to procurement, storage, and distribution of in-kind assistance.
- Monitoring of electronically recorded transactions allows partners to better assess refugee needs.

In 2014, UNHCR shifted from sector-specific cash assistance to a more comprehensive ‘unconditional’ strategy to administer monthly cash grants with the objective of targeting the most vulnerable refugees. The refugee population at large will continue to benefit from protection services, food, health and education and other *ad hoc* emergency interventions. In this way, cash assistance via ATM supplements, other forms of assistance.

Emergency Stocks: UNHCR maintains a capacity to respond to a sudden increase in new arrivals all through 2014. Supplies of CRIs are regularly replenished, while more warehouse capacity is needed.

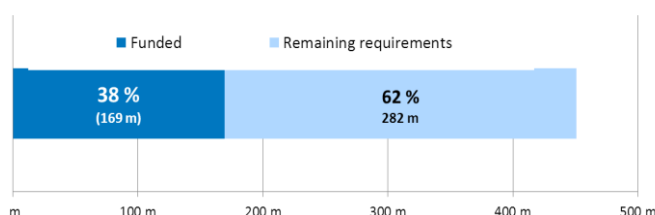
Achievements: January – June

Activity	reached Jan-Jul	2014 Target
Cash for shelter	23,554	31,170
Emergency cash for protection	1,870	16,500
Cash for HK and BK	205,810	203'000
Newcomer and vulnerable families assistance	29,380	96,780

Key figures

- 1,138,874 individuals registered or pending registration as of 31 July 2014
- 41,162 registered refugee households with cash ATM cards for Hygiene and Baby Kits assistance
- 658 Vulnerable refugee households assisted with core relief items in the South

Funding (UNHCR total requirements: USD 451



UNHCR implementing partners

Danish Refugee Council (DRC); World Vision (WV); Save the Children; Makhzoumi Foundation; Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED); Caritas, Social, Humanitarian, Economical Intervention for Local Development (SHEILD); Solidar Suisse; CISP; Concern, Medair, World Vision International and TdH – Italy

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Links: Inter-agency Information Sharing: <http://data.unhcr.org/lebanon/>; Twitter: @UNHCRLebanon - Facebook: UNHCR Lebanon