




**Refugees continue to be impacted by back to back extreme weather conditions.** During the first storm, refugees struggled to cope with heavy snow, torrential rain and gusting winds that flooded sites and damaged shelters. This situation was compounded by a second storm, Miriam, bringing new precipitations, snow and low temperatures. This added to the already saturated lands, rivers and streams causing more floods and displacement of refugees and impacting vulnerable Lebanese. Also, tragically, four refugees, of which three are children, perished as a result of the storms.

Under the leadership of MoSA, over 60 actors through the Inter-Agency Coordination structure continue to respond to the previous storm and meet newly identified needs, whilst also putting in place further preparedness and mitigation measures. Flexible funding was identified as an essential factor for partners to be able to provide an immediate response.

## IMPACT OF THE STORM

 **850**  
Settlements are at risk of extreme weather

 **678** Sites Affected

 **47,189** People affected

Ahead of the storms, 70,000 refugees living in 850 sites were categorized as being at risk by the inter-agency response mechanisms by combining data on flood prone areas of Lebanon, with the inter-agency mapping of informal settlements. Across the at-risk areas, partners were able to identify 47,189 individuals affected in 678 sites through quick phone surveys and rapid needs assessments, with 259 in the North, 227 in the Bekaa, 119 in Beirut and Mount Lebanon and 74 in the South. Of those, 342 sites were prioritized for immediate assistance.

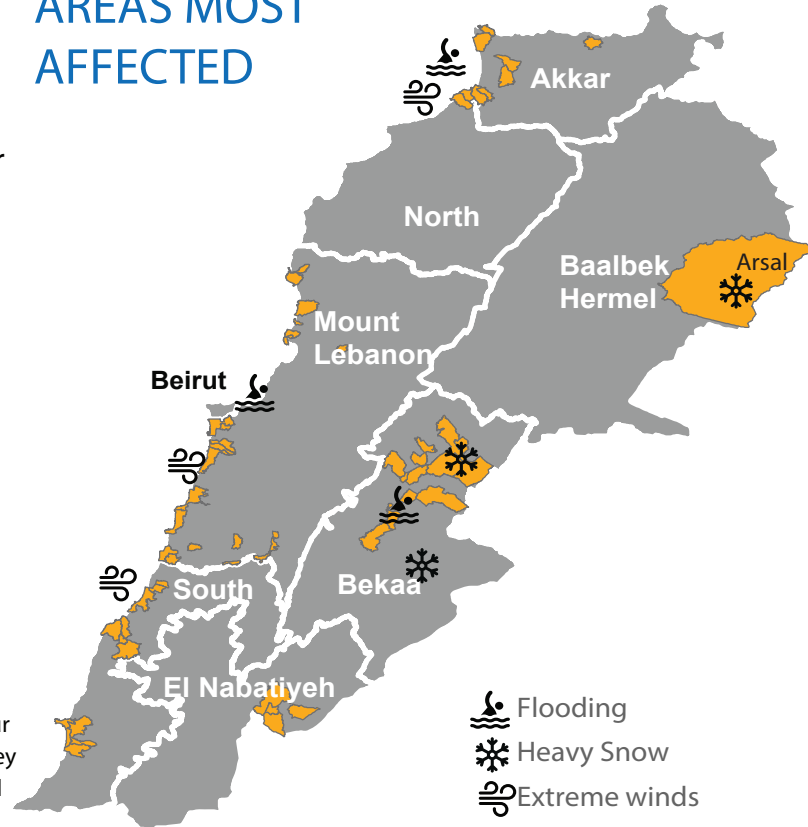
**Close to 100 percent of immediate needs were covered.** Since the beginning of the crisis, of the 47,189 people that were affected in the four regions, 42,130 were deemed to be in need of emergency assistance. They received core relief items, blankets, mattresses and winter clothes as well as initial shelter assistance. Namely, 3,802 families received weatherproofing kits (see infographic). As the storms were ongoing, 12 sites were pumped free of water and desludging took place in 71 sites that could be accessed by machinery. In total, 163 drainage kits were distributed, and have proven to be effective in digging water channels, cleaning trenches and better ensuring upkeep of previous site improvements.

**Providing assistance in some areas was slow or blocked.** In Beirut Mount Lebanon, there were 11 sites in Choueifat, at risk of evictions that did not receive sealing off kits or core relief items due to municipality



<sup>1</sup> CNRS data

## AREAS MOST AFFECTED



instructions prohibiting distributions in these areas. Relocation procedures put in place by some local authorities caused delays. Also, due to heavy snowfall, Yammoune and Barqa in northwest Bekaa were not accessible to partners for some time, and a few areas of Aarsal, in large informal settlements, namely in some inner alleys, were not accessible to bulldozers, with only manual removal as an option.

**People most affected.** Families living in informal settlements, sub-standard shelters and persons with specific needs were most affected. The non-permanent nature of the homes in the informal settlements and location put families at increased risk, especially in the Bekaa region, where 45 percent of displaced Syrians reside. In Western and Central Bekaa, areas which are flat, make water evacuation extremely challenging. In addition to those living on the Banks of the Litani River, where overflowing waters and floods are highly likely. Persons with specific needs were provided with additional support, including those with urgent medical needs, disabilities, elderly persons, and children. Refugees were referred for follow up among partners. The families of the four persons who died as a result of the storm are being assisted with psychosocial support in addition to other help. Some legal assistance was also provided when documents were lost in the storm. In some instances, cash was distributed but should be harmonized to avoid raising expectations of refugees in some areas. Basic Assistance and Protection partners are meeting to discuss the way forward and will put in place parameters to be followed should this modality of assistance continue.



**Additional support to non-residential sites required.** While the initial focus was on informal settlements, non-residential sites, including collective sites, are often unsafe and need support. Referrals were received throughout the storms to provide assistance for those adversely affected in these residences. The main damages sustained during the storms included water leakages, which destroyed belongings as well as caused partial collapse of roof/walls, and floods inside shelters. Temporary interventions, such as providing plastic sheeting, were provided; however, targeting these shelter types requires more time, resources and follow up, and will be conducted in the next weeks.

Work with authorities to relocate refugees living in areas that even with site improvements would still be at risk.

**Relocation of refugees was facilitated during the response.** In sites, where water pumping was not feasible or successful, evacuation and relocation were identified as the most appropriate solutions. Most refugees in this situation were able to find their own solutions by moving in temporarily with friends or relatives, and in some cases with local families from the surrounding community. Some refugees opted to stay in fully-flooded sites stating they feared not being allowed to return to their site or wanting to wait for levels to recede. For 2,751 others, alternative accommodation was found in community centres, mosques and schools. Of those who were relocated 1,899 have now returned to their original informal sites or residences, and 852 remain displaced in the North and the Bekaa.

In other sites and locations, that were partially flooded, most refugees stayed in their homes or relocated to stay with friends and family on a temporary basis. On the 16 of January, the basement of one of the collective shelters in Bissariye Municipality, Saida District (known as “the Pepsi building”), which houses approximately 134 refugee families, flooded. The Zaharani Union of Municipalities intervened by digging a trench allowing water to flow from the basement, however later the same evening flood waters rose again and families relocated upstairs and to neighbouring homes for the night.



Provide unearmarked funding as this makes agencies more agile to respond more efficiently and in shorter time frames.

**A diversity of private Lebanese initiatives complemented the inter-agency response.** These initiatives took place both online and offline, leading to significant financial and in-kind donations in support of those affected by the storm. This show of solidarity was unprecedented in its size and reflected the scale of the emergency.

## Next Steps and Way Forward



**Safe and efficient relocations remains a priority.** While relocation sites are available, and the pool of contingency sites was expanded in the lead up to Miriam, identifying additional mustering points and relocation sites needs to be negotiated with MoSA and municipalities. For situations of larger-scale emergencies, this will facilitate quick movement of refugees to safe locations. Similarly, the development of procedures with local authorities prior to the emergency on how to facilitate relocations will help to avoid delays. Pre-identification of persons with specific needs in each site and existing transportation agreements would also help strengthen the relocation. Moreover, a number of the temporary relocation sites that hosted refugees who were evacuated during the storms need further support, as some buildings were damaged by the large numbers of affected individuals. Partners are assessing the needs following the return of refugees back to their original sites and residences. Safety of site should be ensured prior to return.

**Rehabilitation of flood prone areas must be prioritized by partners and facilitated by local authorities.** There are 459 informal settlements in 57 municipalities located in flood-plains, creeks and agricultural areas that do not have draining trenches, or are so low that no matter what improvements are made will not be safe or resilient to inclement weather. In 2018, 259 sites were improved, building their resilience to extreme weather conditions. This resulted in only 18 percent of them being flooded. As the water recedes, increased weatherproofing, site improvements, such as gravelling and digging of drainage channels to evacuate rain water, and further desludging is required. 166 additional site improvements are needed across Lebanon and 87 of them lack funding.

**Limiting impact in flood prone areas will be supported through improved disaster risk reduction and management.** Newly collected data from these storms will be used to update the “flood risk” levels as part of a flood mapping exercise developed based on the Inter-Agency Mapping Platform (IAMP). This is reviewed yearly by the Shelter Sector. Tracking flood zones and natural land slopes in collaboration with Disaster Risk Management Committees and counterparts, will help in devising tailored solutions for each of the affected areas for improved water evacuation.

It will also help to further identify areas that will continue to be flooded even with improvements – such as those located on the banks of the Litani River, and in informal settlements in Western and Central Bekaa, where the flat topography makes water evacuation extremely challenging. Solutions in consultation with local authorities must be found for the refugees that live in these areas. Also, alternatives are needed for those living in





sub-standard shelter, such as the Pepsi building. In the immediate, discussions are being held with the relevant authorities to identify appropriate solutions for families living there.

At the same time, more in-depth post-storm assessments are ongoing across the country and will inform the development of municipal-level plans with local authorities and in consultation with Disaster Risk Management. In all areas, support to unions and municipalities will be necessary **to ensure appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation to infrastructures affected by the storm** are completed. Moving forward, local authorities will also need support to put in place **adequate disaster risk reduction and mitigation measures** in high risk areas.

Donors to ensure that funding is available for expanded preparedness and prevention interventions, namely in the Shelter and Water sectors. Experience has proven that sites that were improved and received assistance prior to the storms were less affected. A broader coverage before the winter season is essential to making sites and families more resilient and will help limit the damages.

**Reinforcing communication and mutual accountability at all levels is essential to strengthen the response.** Communication with authorities is being further expanded at the preparedness level, for rapid response and in terms of rehabilitation plans. Early communication with Disaster Risk Management at national level and operational cells in the field are essential to enhance response and referrals. In terms of response, early coordination with local authorities will help to facilitate permission for emergency trenching, clearing and pumping, access and relocation.

Also, local NGOs were among some of the first to respond and efforts need to be made to fully include them in emergency coordination structures, and ensure that communication channels and procedures are shared again with all partners in the preparation phase. Also, flexible funding mechanisms to national NGOs would allow for a strengthened response in the initial 72 hours.

**Following stocktaking exercises since the first week of the emergency, partners have agreed to the following to ensure a consistent approach across all four regions:**

- In the first 24 hours, an initial phone survey is used to prioritize sites using the Extreme Weather Phone Questionnaire.
- Followed by the Rapid Needs Assessment Tool (Extreme Weather Questionnaire) to determine multi-sector needs.
- Sector specific tools are rolled out based on results of the Rapid Needs Assessment.
- A tracking matrix is put in place to ensure all assessments and distributions are accessible to partners, and can be updated by relevant actors in real time.
- SOPs will be revised and updated where necessary to ensure they are detailed enough for partners to know what to do and who to contact. These SOPs will be recirculating as widely as possible to ensure inclusion of all partners in the response.
- At the national level, efforts will be made to ensure no duplicate requests are being sent to the field for information. Inter-sector coordinators are focal points in the field to receive the information to be then sent to Inter-sector at national level.
- The use of cash is being discussed to formulate a harmonized approach.

**The common tools, such as the Extreme Weather Phone Questionnaire, Extreme Weather Questionnaire and Tracking Matrix will be recirculated.**

**Partners:** ACF, Anera, AVSI, Basma and Zeitouna, CARITAS Lebanon, CISP, Concern WW, DAF, Damma, Dorcas, DPNA, GVC, HIMAYA, ICRC, Intersos, IRC, IR, Lebanese Red Cross, Leb-relief, LRC-DMU, LWR, Makzhoumi, Medair, MERATH, Mercy Corps, MOIM, MOSA, MoSDA, MSF, Municipalities, NRC, PCPM, People in Need Slovakia, PU-AMI, SALAM LADC, SAMS, SCI, SAWA group, SB Overseas, SIF, SHEILD, Solidarités International, SOS, TdH-L, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFIL, UNRWA, URDA, WFP, WVI and Zahrani.

**UN agencies, INGO and NNGO partners, and donors continue to build on lessons learned and work to ensure enhanced preparedness and mitigation measures are in place.** Now that the onset of the emergency has subsided, attention needs to be focused on broader preparation and winterization strategies to reduce risks, including pre-positioning of stocks, early warning systems, and flexible funds for quick emergency response. Stocks will need to be replenished and sites prioritized for improvements.



Work with authorities and put in place action plans with municipalities to improve structures in informal settlements to help sites withstand

**Protection mainstreaming and accountability will be furthered to strengthen the response.** For instance, during the preparedness phase all actors needs to be made aware of all relevant protection SOPs (i.e. for child separation, evictions, etc.), mitigate negative coping that is linked to not relocating through targeted communication, and ensure that lists of persons with specific needs are available by site.



## Winter Assistance

357

Sites  
assisted



8,717

Families  
assisted



43,600

Individuals  
assisted



3,296

Weather  
proofing kits



Still in stock  
9,059



26,760

Blankets  
distributed



12,354

Mattresses  
distributed



Still in stock  
4,870

2,847

Fuel Cards  
Distributed



Still in stock  
4,039

2,818

Non - Food  
items



Still in stock  
13,085

2,563

Clothes  
distributed



1,850

Hygiene /  
Dignity kits



Still in stock  
3,204

1,270

Food Parcels  
provided



245

Baby Kits  
distributed



Still in stock  
250

200

Sites  
Received  
Water  
Trucking



163

Drainage  
Kits  
distributed



Still in stock  
421

130

Families  
received  
E-cash



71

Desludging  
sites



12

Sites  
Water  
Pumped



CLOSE TO 100 PERCENT OF  
IMMEDIATE NEEDS WERE COVERED