



Lebanon Update

Support to Displaced Syrians

March 03 - March 09 2012



UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) launching the public library in Aidamoun village in Wadi Khaled. © UNHCR – Bathoul Ahmed – February 27 2012

Highlights of the week

Numbers

The number of displaced Syrians currently registered with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) in North Lebanon is 7,088 persons. Since the previous week, there has been an increase of 30 newly registered persons, mainly in the Wadi Khaled, Akroom, Bire, Halba, Old Akkar and Tripoli areas.

Estimates over the past several weeks by UNHCR and partners, placed the number of Syrian displaced in the Bekaa valley at approximately 4000 persons.

Last weekend more Syrians crossed with some 50 families arriving in Aarsal, and 170 families in Fakha village. According to the mayor of Aarsal, there are an additional 75 families in Mashariia Al Qaa, although some NGOs place the number at twice that amount. The most reliable estimates place the total number in the Bekaa valley to be around 4000 persons/ UNHCR is working to verify the current numbers.

There are approximately 1000 more receiving assistance from UNHCR and partners in other parts of Lebanon.

Protection and Security

The security situation in Wadi Khaled remained calm this week. The vast majority of new arrivals crossed into Lebanon from the eastern border, mostly coming from Homs and surrounding areas.

This week 35 wounded Syrians were admitted to hospitals with one passing away en route. This brings the total number of wounded Syrians, since September, to 268 people. HRC is covering the expenses for their treatment.

While recent arrivals indicate that passage has been permitted to many hundreds of persons, other reports of access denied are being reviewed. UNHCR continues to be in regular contact with persons of concern and with the Lebanese authorities to follow up on all protection concerns.

Assistance in North Lebanon

Distribution

The HRC, UNHCR and partners continued the distribution of food and non-food items (NFI) this week, assisting 288 families (1,421 persons).

Some 600 food and hygiene kits were distributed by the HRC, UNHCR and its implementing partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). An additional 68 hygiene kits and 197 torches were distributed by UNICEF as well as 47 diapers by Islamic Relief. Baby milk and sanitation pads were also provided.

The weather in north Lebanon remains very cold so UNHCR and DRC distributed 766 fuel coupons, equivalent to 15,520 liters, to displaced Syrian families to help heat stoves for warmth.

Shelter

As the second phase of rehabilitating Al Rama collective shelter continues, a living room area that includes a TV with sofas was installed. This was a need expressed by the displaced living in the collective shelters.

Additionally, four washing machines, one for each of the collective shelters, were procured and will be installed as requested by the displaced community.

In-depth mapping to identify additional collective shelters with potential for rehabilitation is underway in Wadi Khaled, Halba and Tripoli and the Norwegian Refugee Council continued its rehabilitation of host family dwellings.

Education

This week, 377 students attended remedial classes aimed at helping integrate the displaced Syrians into the Lebanese school curriculum. The classes are offered to both displaced Syrian children from the local Lebanese host community. Due to bad weather and security conditions, including a scheduled

demonstration in Wadi Khaled, there was reduced attendance rate for remedial classes this week.

UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), DRC, UNHCR and SCS held an education working group meeting on March 8 in North Lebanon to continue monitoring school enrolment and drop-out rates and explore the possibility of adding remedial classes in Tall Bire and Halba. The working group will begin identifying local NGOs that would be able to support and facilitate these classes.

UNHCR's partner, Save the Children Sweden (SCS) visited the Mashta Hammoud and Mashta Hassan public schools to follow-up on school attendance and the Syrian children's learning and behavioral progress. SCS social workers met with teachers and directors in the schools who reported that the displaced Syrian children are feeling more comfortable and interactive in class. Around 60% of Syrian children passed the midterm exams, and all students have showed improvement in their learning progress.

Assistance in other parts of Lebanon

Distribution

UNHCR is providing assistance through local partners in the Bekaa. Some 900 mattresses, 2,000 blankets, 3,160 fuel coupons, 100 food kits are being distributed to displaced Syrians who have recently fled to the area.

UNICEF provided 600 hygiene kits and 1,000 jerry cans for fuel to displaced Syrians in Aarsal, Majdel Anjar and Baalbeck. The distribution was facilitated by the local municipalities, communities and the coalition of NGOs. Additionally, personal donations of clothing were received and distributed and UNHCR through the DRC will be setting up the

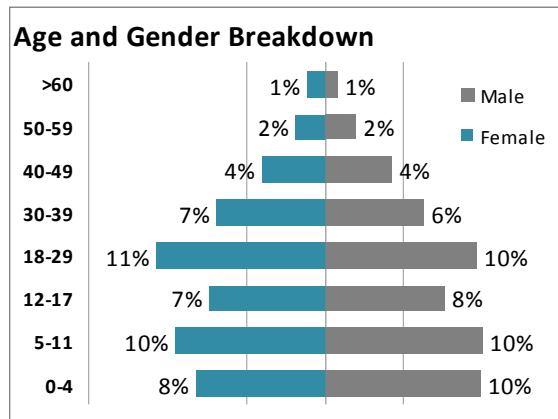
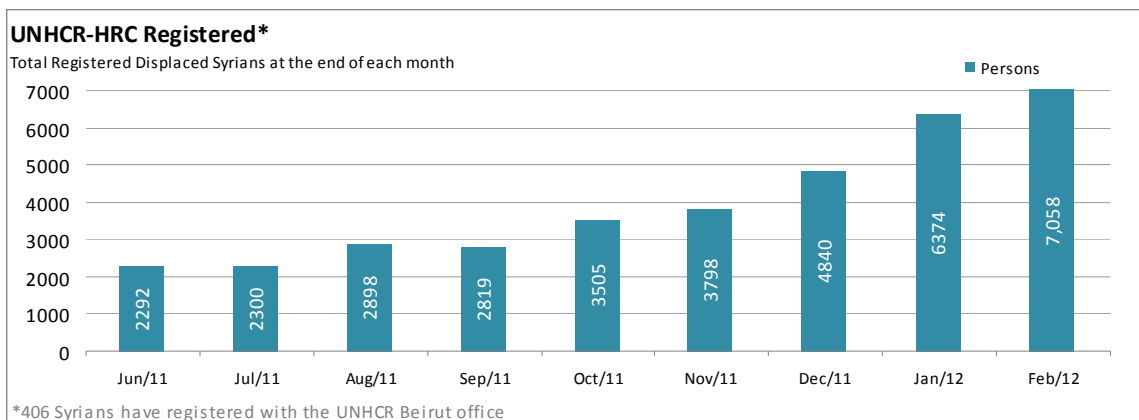
mechanism for fuel coupons to be distributed in the middle of the Bekaa area and Baalbeck.

Shelter

The majority of displaced Syrians are residing in houses, rooms, barns and huts made available by the local communities. UNHCR and partners, along with local NGOs, are conducting assessments to

identify additional potentials for shelter. The Coalition of Charities identified five possible shelters: two farms in Saadnayel, one unoccupied school in Majdal Anjar, one school in Kfar Dines and a school in Marj El Zohour. UNHCR, IOM and NRC are examining different shelter options.

Situational Overview



Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 6,000 Syrians into North Lebanon. Many subsequently returned to Syria, while others relocated within Lebanon. Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC have registered and assisted over 11,000 persons in the north.

Currently there are 7,088 persons in the north. Local mayors and NGOs have played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

There are also concentrations of displaced Syrians residing in other parts of Lebanon. UNHCR's latest estimates with partners indicate that there are between 4,000-

5,000 persons in need in the Bekaa and south of Beirut.

Syrians who have entered Lebanon reside mostly with host families in difficult circumstances. In North Lebanon, some 200 live in collective centres that have been renovated by UNHCR and partners.

Many individuals and families have been deeply affected by the events that caused them to leave and are reluctant to return home until the situation stabilizes.

Protection

The vast majority of Syrians registered with the HRC and UNHCR have come from Tal Kalakh Homs. The majority of displaced Syrians in the Bekaa region have come from Baba Amro In Homs and Al Qusayr, south of Homs.

They express fear and anxiety about returning and most do not feel that the situation is safe enough for them to do so yet.

The majority of those who have arrived in recent months to North Lebanon have crossed at official border crossings expressing fear of going through the unofficial ones. They also express concern of the reported presence of landmines on the Syrian side of the border. In the Bekaa, local actors reported that the majority of the displaced have crossed through unofficial border crossings. UNHCR teams are currently verifying this information.

UNHCR maintains regular contact with the Lebanese authorities and civil society representatives to follow-up on the security situation of the displaced populations.

Since the outset last April, the Lebanese government has taken a humanitarian approach allowing displaced Syrians to enter Lebanon. There have been very few cases of arrests of illegal entry/stay in the past many months. In all cases, persons

were released upon UNHCR's interventions.

Circulation permits have not been issued by the authorities to those who crossed at unofficial border crossings in the North. This has limited their movement within North Lebanon.

Records reveal that 268 wounded Syrians have been treated in various hospitals in Lebanon since the beginning of the influx. Expenses related to their treatment are covered by the Lebanese authorities through the HRC. Their treatment and needs are followed-up by UNHCR and partners.

Assistance

Outside of North Lebanon where the HRC is not operational, refugees are assisted by local NGOs, municipalities, and other partners. UNHCR is contributing to and expanding its efforts to meet humanitarian needs of these communities.

In North Lebanon, a very solid coordinated response and positive working relations with the government's HRC and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) were established at the outset to the benefit of the refugees and hosting communities. These partnerships continue and together with other UN and NGO partners, the needs of refugees and affected communities are being holistically addressed. They include the following:

- Protection interventions to ensure safety, physical integrity and non-refoulement;
- Assistance to meet basic needs;
- Education and remedial classes;
- Provision of medical and psycho-social care.

A common database is in use by the HRC and UNHCR, and referral mechanisms were established to enable the displaced

persons to access assistance through specialized partners in the North. Identification and registration occurs on a daily basis by outreach teams. UNHCR and the HRC verify the numbers during the

monthly distribution of food/non-food items. Persons found no longer to be in the area are de-registered. Many of these are known to have returned to Syria

Community Services Outreach workers from the MoSA and DRC continue to visit the displaced Syrians at homes and in schools in Wadi Khaled, Tall Bire, and Tripoli in order to counsel them, assess their needs, and refer newcomers to UNHCR and HRC for registration. A comprehensive referral mechanism to respond to survivors of violence has been established among key stakeholders for identified cases.

Shelter Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. Just over 200 persons are accommodated in three (abandoned) schools in the North -Al-Rama, Al-Ibra and Al-Mouanseh schools- and few families are currently accommodated in a mosque in Aarsal. The three above-mentioned schools were initially not well-equipped (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) to receive large numbers of people but have improved and are regularly monitored. The hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque has also been rehabilitated to host displaced families should there be a need in the future.

UNHCR and the HRC initiated the renovation of Al Rama, Al Mouanseh, and Kashlak schools, and the hall of Khorbet Daoud Mosque, while the renovation of the Al Ibra school was undertaken by the Al-Bashaer Islamic Association.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) together with partner organizations and outreach workers identified host family residences in pressing need of improvement in preparation for the winter. Through this assessment, NRC provided 90 families with coupons that enabled them to renovate their homes, allowing for better living conditions for both the local and displaced communities. NRC is currently in the process of planning for the potential continuation of this project.

UNHCR is looking into additional shelter options in the Bekaa as there is limited capacity among local families.

Distribution (Food/ NFI) UNHCR along with the HRC, DRC, Caritas Migrant Centre, World Vision, and UNICEF distribute food and non-food items to the displaced on a monthly basis. UNHCR continues to provide food and non-food items to newly registered families who were not on the UNHCR-HRC database during the last distribution.

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|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mattresses | 4,613 - North 897 - Bekaa |
| Blankets | 4,857 – North 2,000 - Bekaa |
| Food kits | 6,933 – North 100 – Bekaa |
| Fuel coupons of 20 liters | 21,201 – North 3,160 - Bekaa |

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| Diapers | 886 |
| Baby milk | 1,317 |
| Baby kits | 424 |
| Hygiene kits | 3,960 – North 600 - Bekaa |
| Women's underwear | 714 |
| Tuition fees | 465 |
| Books | 465 |
| Stationary | 596 |
| Uniforms | 465 |
| Family kit (kitchen utensils) | 48 |
| Clothes coupons of 75,000 LBP | 1,113 |
| Personal donation | 403 |
| Clothes by UNICEF | 52 |
| Toys by UNICEF | 92 |
| Educational kits for children in remedial classes | 23 |

Education A total of 525 displaced children have enrolled into public schools. However, the school enrolment rate in North Lebanon is 53% at the primary school level (6-11 year old) and as little as 9% at secondary school level (12-17 year old). Reasons vary between the different age groups.

The main reasons for low retention among primary school-aged children include: late registration, denial of access by some school administrators, unease over their circumstances and anxiety concerning of the different curriculum. Very low secondary school enrolment is largely due to cultural practices and specifically the expectation that boys from the age of 13 years are expected to work and girls from that age are encouraged to get married.

UNHCR is seeking to improve the school enrolment rate in 2012 through provision of awareness sessions and remedial classes.

Health UNHCR, HRC and UNHCR's implementing partner International Medical Corps (IMC) have established a referral system so that registered displaced Syrians in the North have access to health care services through the most specialized partner.

Primary Healthcare

Primary Health Care Centres, Social Development Centres of the MoSA, and a few NGO-run health care centres in the region are providing primary health care and medication to the displaced. UNHCR covers the full cost for doctor consultations and diagnostic tests for women and children and up to 85% of diagnostic tests for all displaced persons. Since September 2011, there have been 986 patients who have received primary health care from different health centres and mobile medical units in North Lebanon.

In the Bekaa, vaccination is being provided to all persons in need including displaced Syrians through national channels. Different health actors (UNHCR, IMC, WHO and UNFPA) are ready to build on the referral mechanism that has been developed in the North. They are now identifying primary health care centres in the region to streamline the coverage of medical services, capacity building needs in the local community and awareness sessions needs.

Secondary Healthcare

The HRC covers the cost of secondary and tertiary health care through local

hospitals in the North. UNHCR provides additional support where needed. The HRC and IMC reached agreements with five hospitals for discounted rates in the provision of necessary health care. Since September 2011, there have been 455 hospital admissions, mostly covered by HRC.

WHO and UNHCR are liaising with MoPH, IMC, MSF and other partners to increase the provision of chronic medications and to improve the health referral mechanism and health information at the field level.

In the Bekaa, UNHCR will cover the cost of hospital care at three local hospitals through its implementing partner IMC. As of next week, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) will start covering the hospitalization cost of all injured displaced. Other cases in need of hospitalization will be covered by the HRC if transferred to North Lebanon.

Mental Healthcare

Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) started the implementation of a mental health project jointly with the Makassed Public Health Centre (PHC). A psychologist and a psychiatrist have been deployed to Makassed's centre to provide mental health counselling to all Wadi Khaled residents, including the displaced.

In the Bekaa, in the absence of HRC's involvement, UNHCR with its implementing partner IMC will contribute to covering health care services for displaced Syrians. Referral hospitals are being identified.

Capacity Building

UNHCR has invested in strengthening the capacities of governments and local partners through:

- Regular coordination meetings and joint plans of action;
- Technical and material support to the HRC in regards to registration, data collection and verification;
- Training and guidance to HRC, MoSA, partners, medical, educational and social service providers in a wide range of areas including:
 - protection of refugees and internally displaced persons;
 - effective registration and monitoring practices;
 - psychological first aid and mental health;
 - remedial class management and positive discipline;
 - computer skills for local health service providers.
- Quick Impact Projects such as public gardens, public library and a cine club;
- Establishment of medical referral mechanisms and training for the systematic entry of data in the health referral system.