Damage after Israeli shelling in the Ghobeiry neighbourhood on the outskirts of Beirut. | Photo: © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

LEBANON EMERGENCY
REGIONAL UPDATE
20 NOVEMBER 2024

Key Figures

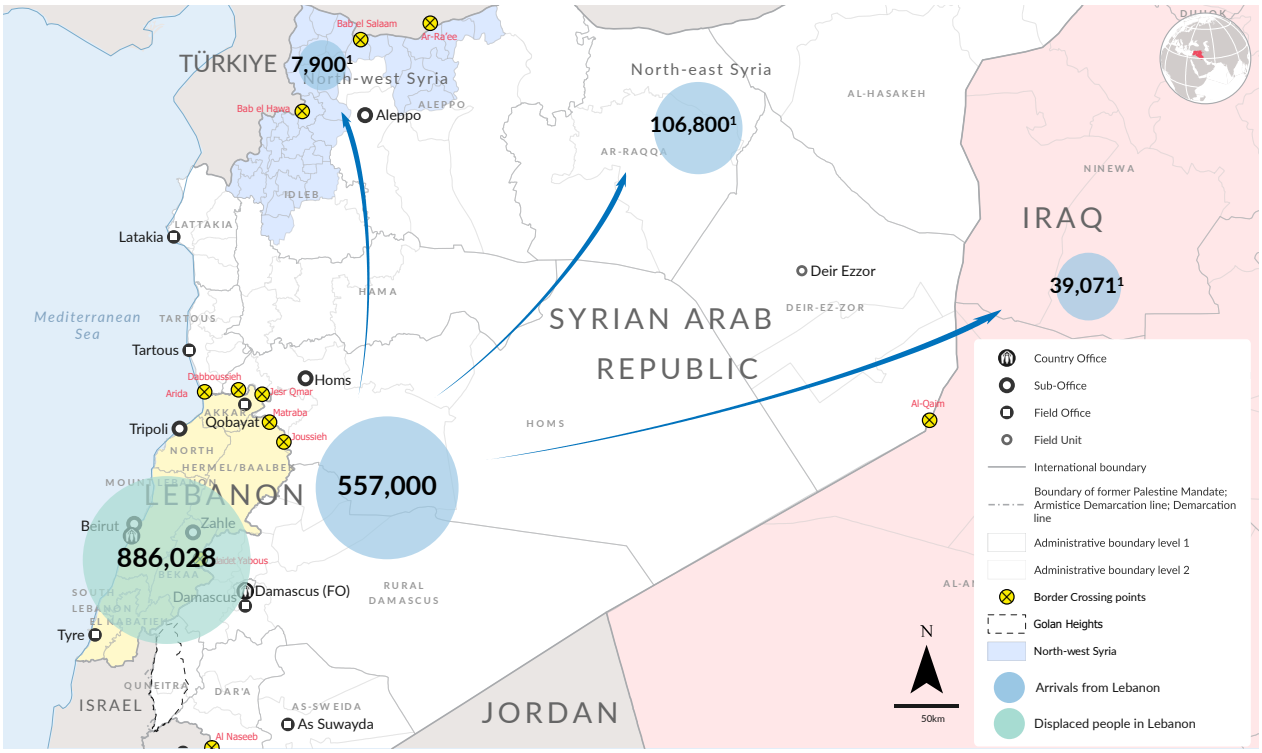
1.3 million people are estimated to be affected inside Lebanon according to Lebanese authorities

886,028 people have been internally displaced in Lebanon according to joint IOM and UNHCR tracking[1]

97,000 refugees identified by UNHCR are secondarily displaced inside Lebanon due to the conflict, including 80,500 since 23 September

557,000 people (both Lebanese and Syrian) are estimated to have crossed from Lebanon to Syria since 24 September[2]

[1] *DTM Round 63 https://dtm.iom.int/reports/mobility-snapshot-round-63-18-11-2024*
[2] *The numbers of new arrivals in this document are based on "SARC Emergency Response for Lebanese Refugees and Syrian Returnees" and daily updates from UNHCR Border Posts. Figures are undergoing verification and are subject to change.*



[1] *Figures for north-west and north-east Syria and Iraq may include individuals already counted in the overall total of 557,000 people entering Syria, as some continued to other locations after crossing the border.*

Regional overview of displacement. The boundaries and names shown and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations | Printing date: 20 November 2024 | Sources: IOM, UNCS, UNHCR, SARC | Author: UNHCR - MENA DIMA | Feedback: jorrbdima@unhcr.org

Since 23 September 2024, the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has intensified and sharply escalated. Over the last two months, Israeli bombardments inside Lebanon and incursions into southern Lebanon have resulted in widespread displacement, civilian casualties, and infrastructure damage which include the destruction of sometimes entire villages, farmland and livestock and the disruption of essential services, such as healthcare facilities, water systems, and schools across Lebanon.

The frequency and impact of Israeli airstrikes have continued to expand beyond southern Lebanon, forcing hundreds of thousands of Lebanese and refugees, mostly Syrians, to flee their homes. At the end of October, airstrikes intensified in Baalbek, hours after Israel issued evacuation orders for the area, resulting in significant population movements. On 6 November, airstrikes also intensified in Beirut's southern suburbs, including a strike near the airport, followed by heavy bombardments again in the days thereafter. To date, hostilities have resulted in some 3,516 deaths and 14,929 injured, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health, and more than 886,000 people have been internally displaced, among them over 80,000 Syrian refugees. The humanitarian situation[3] in Lebanon has now reached levels that exceed the those experienced during the 2006 war.

In Lebanon, Syrian refugees face particular challenges accessing collective shelters. UNHCR also identified 19 new administrative measures impacting Syrians, involving movement restrictions, checkpoint arrests, data collection, taxes/fees, and limitations on rental agreements/accommodation.

A number of official and unofficial border crossing points with Syria, used by people fleeing Lebanon, have been hit by Israeli airstrikes. Notably, on 25 October and 2 November Joussieh border crossing (Homs) was hit by airstrikes during the night, rendering the road inaccessible to vehicles and causing damage to UNHCR's border post facility. Movement of people crossing through Joussieh was subsequently limited, with numbers crossing decreasing to less than 100 families per day and no movements observed after dark.

[3] https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-flash-update-40-escalation-hostilities-lebanon-31-october-2024

On 29 October, one of the main border crossings between Lebanon and Syria including for commercial traffic, suffered another attack, where the existing crater near Masnaa (Lebanon) was hit by an airstrike. The craters in the road continue to prevent the crossing of vehicles to Jdeidet Yabous border crossing in rural Damascus. Most new arrivals who are crossing by foot need to be transported from the Lebanese side to the Syrian crossing point, Jdeidet Yabous, through buses organized by UNHCR's partner, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), and a lesser number through privately arranged transportation.

Such attacks jeopardize civilians right to be able to flee the conflict in Lebanon, but also undermines the UN and partners' presence and capacities to provide timely and effective humanitarian assistance.

Israel has also intensified its airstrikes inside Syria, with some targeting areas where new arrivals have sought shelter in rural Damascus, Homs and Alqusair and Shamsin, where on 11 November an airstrike hit near to a location where Lebanese refugees were gathering to receive assistance.

The decision to allow private Syrian vehicles, alongside previously authorized Lebanese vehicles, physical access to transport people from Masnaa directly to Damascus has enhanced accessibility and eased the challenges often faced by individuals during the difficult journey. On 14 November, in another positive step to help Syrians arriving from Lebanon and ease congestion, the Syrian Government extended the temporary suspension of the US$ 100 currency exchange requirement for Syrians entering from Lebanon until 30 November (Decision No. 46 of 2020 and its amendments).

Some 63 per cent of the 557,000 arrivals into Syria are Syrians and 37 per cent are Lebanese, and the majority of the 106,000 Syrians who have arrived in north-east Syria after fleeing Lebanon have transited through government-controlled areas to non-government controlled areas. Arrivals of Syrians into north-west Syria continue, albeit at considerably lower numbers than in early October. The Aoun Al-Dadat internal crossing point has been closed since 1 November for security reasons and the Abu Zendin internal crossing point remains inactive. Only half of the estimated 7,900 Syrians who have arrived in north-west Syria have returned to their original sub-districts, with high rates of family separation observed – affecting one-third of households. New displacements continue from Lebanon across international borders toward Iraq, with more than 39,000 refugees from Lebanon arriving in Iraq since 23 September.

The Government of Syria continues to keep the borders open for Syrians, Lebanese and others fleeing Lebanon. Positively, UNHCR continues to have access to the border as well as in destination areas where Syrians have returned to. The vast majority of new arrivals, including Lebanese, are being hosted by Syrian families and friends, which has placed extraordinary pressure on local communities who were already struggling to make ends meet prior to the influx.

UNHCR and partners are actively responding to needs on the ground beyond the border areas, using its existing community support structures. In view of the ongoing conflict, flexible and sustained international financial support to humanitarian partners is necessary for both Lebanon and Syria.

Lebanese scouts unloading food boxes from UNHCR and its partner, Save the Children, at a school in Bekaa, Lebanon, where 156 displaced people are currently living. | Photo: © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

Operational Updates

LEBANON

UNHCR continues to respond to the needs of refugees and Lebanese displaced across Lebanon, coordinating closely with the authorities and other humanitarian organizations and providing protection services, emergency cash assistance, core relief items, access to safe shelter, health care, and psychosocial support. UNHCR estimates that at least 340,000 Syrian refugees were residing in the cadasters most affected by the hostilities.

UNHCR response since the escalation of hostilities in September:

- 323,410 core relief items (CRIs) distributed to 193,000 people, 90% of whom are Lebanese.
- 413,700 Lebanese and refugees affected assisted with cash assistance.
- 79,323 affected people received shelter support, including cash for shelter, rehabilitation works, enhanced access to water, and improved privacy through gender separation.
- 7,085 displaced people referred for specific support by outreach volunteers.
- Over 55,000 people have followed the new UNHCR Lebanon WhatsApp Channel to receive messages on awareness and security, rising scam risks, and emergency resources.
- UNHCR is targeting the repair of at least 450 collective sites designated by the Government, hosting over 16,000 families. UNHCR repairs are ongoing/completed in 225 of those sites.
- Coverage of treatment of 190 war-wounded refugees at UNHCR contracted hospitals.
- Procurement of ambulances to support evacuation and transfers of critical patients.
- UNHCR continues to support primary health care centres to ensure continuum of services for all, including through support for non-communicable disease, maternal and child health care, and mental health.
- 15 community development centres (CDCs) are open for in-person protection, and psychosocial, social, and legal support, reaching 2,798 people over the past week, through in-person, online or mobile activities. When CDCs are not able to operate, UNHCR and partners are mobilized within and outside collective shelters - with 266 shelters reached since the crisis escalated.

WHOLE OF SYRIA

Syria

UNHCR is coordinating the inter-agency response to the influx, and leads the Protection and Shelter/NFI sectors in Syria. UNHCR, alongside local authorities, SARC, and the Ministry of Health have been present at five main Syrian border crossing points and through its existing Border Health and Protection Support Points (BHPSPs) run by its partner SARC at four of the crossings, providing immediate assistance to those who have been affected, including at their destinations.

UNHCR response since the escalation of hostilities in September:

- Daily buses supported by UNHCR and SARC continue to provide transportation to vulnerable new arrivals to travel from the border points to their intended destinations. Approximately 46,000 people have benefitted from these transportation services since the onset of the emergency.
- Through partners, UNHCR is providing medical assistance, including primary and emergency health services. Mobile clinics managed by SARC are operational to respond to health needs. So far, over 2,000 individuals have been provided with emergency medical services at the crossing points.
- Over 330,000 individuals have received some 600,000 core relief and winter items in hosting governorates with a high number of new arrivals.
- An estimated 48,000 individuals have received legal support at the Syrian crossing points through UNHCR and its legal partners Syria Trust and SARC. Key legal services delivered included support for children to register and enroll into schools, access to legal documentation, and legal issues for the new arrivals at the border points, such as cases of unaccompanied children, unregistered births, and unauthorized access to some hard-to-reach areas. An estimated 255,000 new arrivals are under 18 years old, which reinforces the need to provide access to primary basic education, thus ensuring that the displacement does not affect the continuity of education of children who fled Lebanon.

- UNHCR and partners are providing protection services to approximately 85,580 individuals who fled Syria and approached UNHCR-supported community centres across the country; these services include child protection, mental health and psychosocial support, education, health and legal services, livelihood support, gender-based violence prevention and response, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

North-east Syria

Some 106,800 people have recently arrived in Ar-Raqqa, Al-Hasakeh and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates.

North-west Syria

As of 19 November, data collected by the IDP Task Force estimates that around 7,900 Syrians returned under adverse circumstances from Lebanon to 30 sub-districts in north-west Syria, mainly in communities in Jarablus, Idleb, Sharan, Maaret Tamsrin, and Dana.[4]

UNHCR's monitoring indicates that the households arriving in north-west Syria are primarily from the north-west originally and have sought refuge with relatives. Women head two-third of these households.

UNHCR response since the escalation of hostilities in September:

- UNHCR has mobilized community protection networks, outreach teams, and protection monitors to monitor new arrivals and provide support. Newcomers are informed about available services at community centers and through outreach programs, with referrals to additional service providers as needed.
- UNHCR and partners are responding to the emergency needs of the returnees at their final destinations in Aleppo and Idle. To date, UNHCR and partners have provided shelter materials and core relief items to 1,951 individuals in need of shelter and basic items.
- As of the beginning of November, the Aoun al-Dadat and Abu Zendin internal crossing points have remained closed, with no refugee returnees arriving since then. Despite the closure, UNHCR and partners stand ready to assist new arrivals once either crossing point opens to returnees from Lebanon.
- UNHCR and partners, working closely with local authorities, continue to actively prepare the Abu Zendin internal crossing point for its anticipated opening. Preparations include the installation of ten 10 shaded areas, the setting up of emergency WASH facilities, and the provision of medical assistance.
- UNHCR enhanced temporary reception where people are entering north-west Syria by setting up four shading areas. One of the new areas is currently being insulated to provide shelter for individuals awaiting entry, while the other three will serve as hubs for service provision. UNHCR is disbursing CRI kits to equip the shading areas.

Syrian father-of-three Firas with his wife and young children at their apartment in Saboura, rural Damascus, Syria, where a UNHCR team visited the family in October 2024. Originally from rural Aleppo, Firas fled to Lebanon because of the crisis in Syria, but has now been forced to flee the hostilities in Lebanon with his family, and cross back into Syria. | Photo: © UNHCR/Vivian Tou'meh

[4] *Figures are preliminary as no comprehensive data has been collected covering all locations in north-west Syria yet.*

IRAQ

UNHCR is aware of 39,071 refugees from Lebanon arriving in Iraq since the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon. The main points of entry remain the Al-Qaim border crossing and the airports in Baghdad and Najaf. The rate of Lebanese refugees arriving in Iraq per day has slightly reduced from an average of 700 per day to 500 per day. Many Lebanese are currently hosted Karbala and in Najaf, as well as in other Governorates including Babil, Baghdad and Diyala.

While Lebanese continue to be the primary nationality of refugees crossing from Syria to Iraq, some 493 households have contacted UNHCR, identifying themselves as Syrian refugees who have fled Lebanon and requesting registration.

UNHCR response since the escalation of hostilities in September:

- UNHCR and its partner remain present in Anbar. UNHCR continues to seek access to refugees at Al-Qaim border to monitor new arrivals from Lebanon.
- Through its partners, UNHCR is also present in Najaf, Karbala, Baghdad, Ninewa, Babil, and other Governorates, maintaining contact with local authorities to gather information on new arrivals.
- To respond to the critical protection needs of new arrivals from Lebanon, UNHCR, in collaboration with existing partners in Federal Iraq, continues to provide child protection, gender-based violence, and mental health and psychosocial support to individuals seeking assistance at community centres. To date, 80 families, primarily Lebanese, have approached UNHCR for these protection services. UNHCR also continues to provide information to refugees from Lebanon on how they can access national services such as education and healthcare.
- UNHCR continues to liaise with the Government and local authorities to gather information on the Government plans which respond to the needs of individuals displaced from Lebanon. The Government of Iraq has committed to include Lebanese in national systems, advising schools to host students coming from Lebanon.

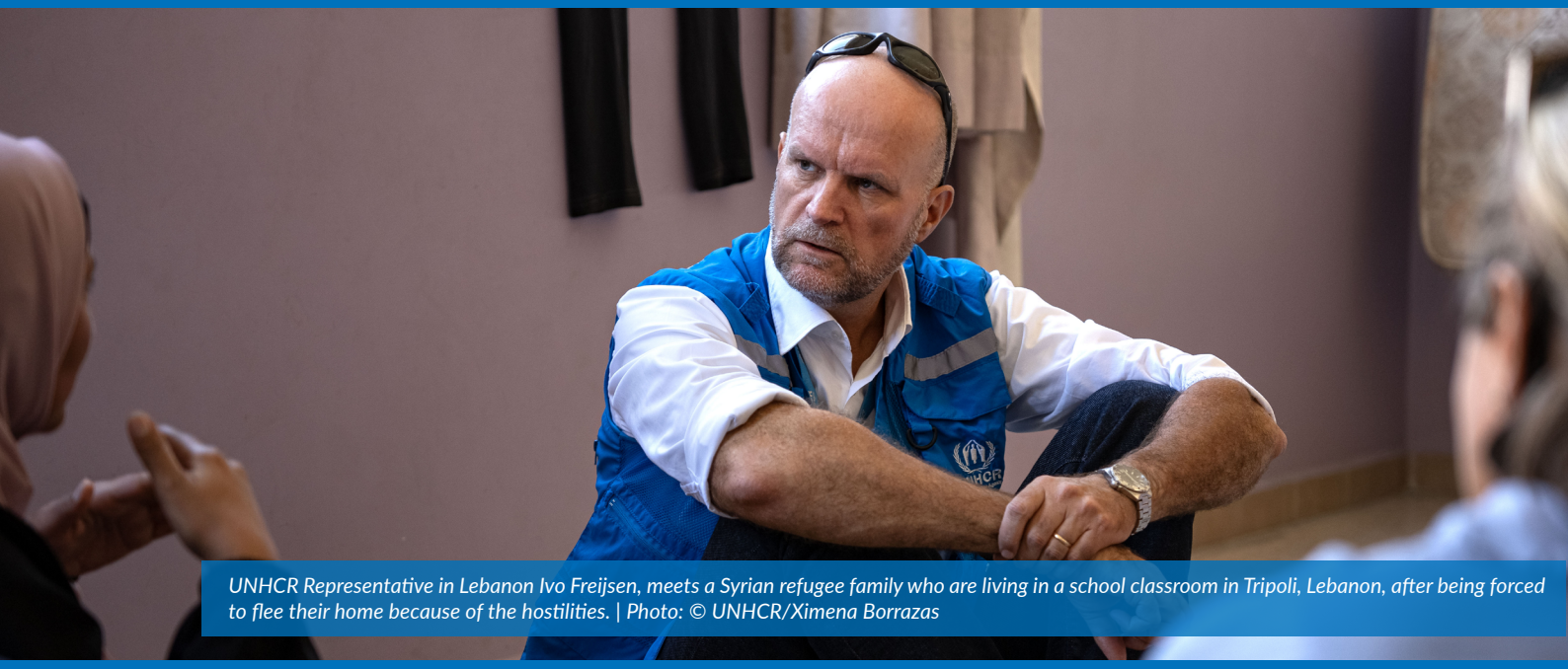
Construction workers assemble partitions, provided by UNHCR, to afford privacy inside classrooms at a Beirut school, where 500 people displaced by the hostilities in Lebanon are living. At least 60 per cent of public schools in Lebanon are now serving as shelters for the displaced.
Photo: © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

Inter-Agency Funding Requirements

The Inter-Agency Flash Appeal for Lebanon was launched in support of the Government-led emergency response and facilitate the swift delivery of humanitarian assistance by partners. The appeal seeks $425.7 million to assist 1 million people affected by the crisis from October to December 2024, with UNHCR's share totaling $111 million. The appeal is funded at 23.5% as of 18 November[5], according to the latest Lebanon Aid Tracking reporting by partners (these funding estimates are preliminary and further follow-up with partners and donors is underway).

The Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria was launched by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. This appeal aims to support Syria's efforts to protect and assist Syrians, Lebanese refugees, other individuals fleeing Lebanon, and host community members. It seeks $324 million from October 2024 to March 2025 to assist 480,000 new arrivals and host community members, with UNHCR's requirements amounting to $124.9 million. The appeal is funded at 6% as of 14 November, per Financial Tracking Service (OCHA FTS), with additional funds in the pipeline.

For the latest operational updates on UNHCR's response to the Lebanon Emergency, please visit Middle East and North Africa on UNHCR's Global Focus.



UNHCR Representative in Lebanon Ivo Freijsen, meets a Syrian refugee family who are living in a school classroom in Tripoli, Lebanon, after being forced to flee their home because of the hostilities. | Photo: © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

For more information, please contact the UNHCR MENA Regional Office in Amman (Jordan) at: MENAreporting@unhcr.org

Donors

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to its operations in the Middle East:

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[4] https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-flash-update-45-escalation-hostilities-lebanon-18-november-2024