



Lebanon Update

Situation in North Lebanon

January 07 - January 13 2012



Displaced Syrian women cleaning the collective shelter in Al Rama – © UNHCR Dalia Khamissy Oct 2011

Highlights of the week

Numbers:

The number of registered Syrians with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) is 5,238. Since last week there has been an increase of some 200 persons, many of whom reside in the Tripoli area.

Shelter and other projects:

A UNHCR shelter expert from Headquarters will arrive on January 15 to evaluate approximately five abandoned structures for their suitability as collective shelters. The expert will also visit current shelters and recommend improvements where necessary. UNHCR and its implementing partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) meanwhile, continue to coordinate with the HRC in identifying additional abandoned structures that can be used as collective shelters should they be needed.

Health:

UNHCR's Senior Regional Public Health Officer visited the Wadi Khaled and Tripoli areas to assess current health referral mechanism and services provided to displaced persons. His recommendations will be the basis for programme adjustments in consultation with HRC and other stakeholders.

Education:

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) has given its approval to extend the school registration period so that newly arrived Syrian students can be enrolled. Accordingly, school directors in Wadi Khaled have started to enroll newly arrived displaced Syrian students in their schools.

UNHCR's implementing partner Save the Children Sweden (SCS) noted a decrease of children's attendance for this week's remedial classes. Poor weather conditions and midterm exams period were among the reasons.

UNHCR and SCS have initiated contact with students' parents to emphasize the importance of these classes. Earlier this winter, UNHCR distributed winter clothing to school-aged children and provided fuel to warm classrooms.

Protection:

There have been reports from displaced and hosting communities of heavy shooting in Tal Kalakh. Displaced Syrians remain very concerned regarding the situation in Syria. Tensions increased with reports of a number of Syrian and Lebanese nationals arrested at Rouwayma checkpoint while heading to Syria after having been hospitalized in northern Lebanon. In addition, a Hermel citizen was reportedly injured in a landmine explosion on the outskirts of Howayek village on the Syrian side of the border.

The issuance of certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC are still on hold. UNHCR is closely liaising with the Lebanese Government to see whether concerns about the exercise can be addressed so that it can proceed as planned. Registration certificates are a means to streamline access to services and prevent fraud.

Quick impact projects (QIPs):

A notable achievement this week was the completion by UNHCR's implementing partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) of the rehabilitation of two public gardens, one located in the Social Development Center (SDC) of Amayer and the second next to Moukaybel municipality. DRC had facilitated these projects earlier this winter in order to enhance both the displaced and the local community's access to social and recreational activities. DRC has also completed the renovation work and provided equipment for a public library in Aidamoon village and a cine-club in Wadi Khaled. These projects are not only benefiting the displaced but also the local communities who have invested space and time into the projects ensuring their sustainability and success. Before launching these projects, DRC facilitated a training in the village of Aydamoun on the management of the public library. This training comes as part of a series of trainings that will aim to improve the management and maintenance of the QIPs.

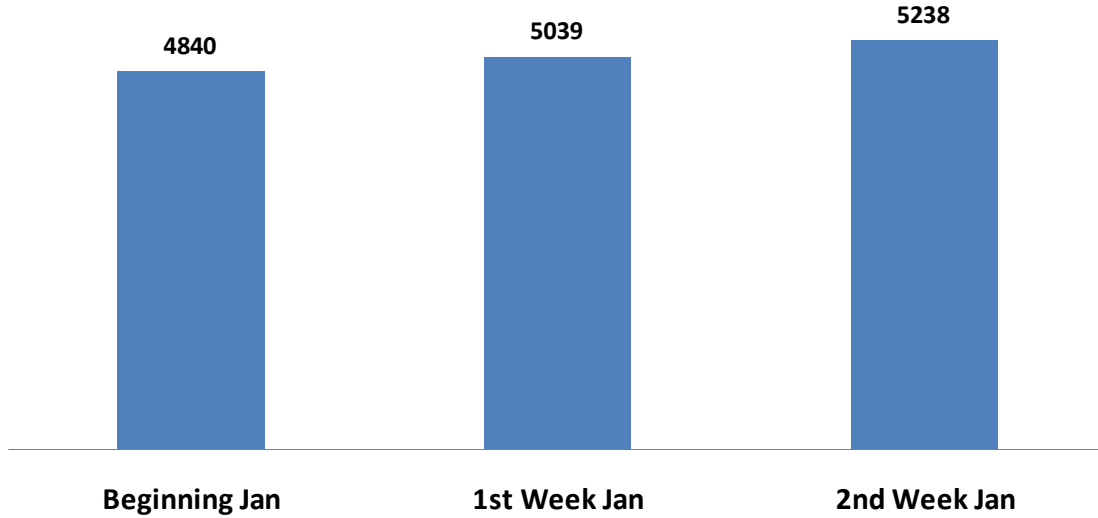
UNICEF and SCS successfully equipped four out of five spaces where children can play safely. Three of these are located in the El Rama, Nabe' Al Awadeh, and El Mounseh public schools. The other two are in local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) where remedial classes are taking place.

Situational Overview

Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 5,000 Syrian refugees into northern Lebanon. Many subsequently returned to Syria, while others relocated inside Lebanon. Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC registered and assisted over 9,000 persons. Currently there are 5,238 persons (976 families) registered in the North and Akkar, residing mostly with host families in difficult circumstances.

Those who remain are unwilling to return until stability and security is restored in their Syrian villages. Many individuals and families have been deeply affected by the events that caused them to flee, and are reluctant to go home until the situation stabilizes.

Registered Displaced Syrians Trend in January 2012



| Age Group | Females | Percentage | Males | Percentage | Total | Percentage |
|-----------|---------|------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|
| 0-04 | 432 | 17% | 501 | 19% | 933 | 18% |
| 05-11 | 511 | 20% | 513 | 20% | 1024 | 20% |
| 12-18 | 374 | 14% | 413 | 16% | 787 | 15% |
| 18-29 | 547 | 21% | 486 | 19% | 1033 | 20% |
| 30-39 | 368 | 14% | 367 | 14% | 735 | 14% |
| 40-49 | 209 | 8% | 237 | 9% | 446 | 9% |
| 50-59 | 91 | 4% | 82 | 3% | 173 | 3% |
| 60+ | 56 | 2% | 51 | 2% | 107 | 2% |
| Total | 2588 | 49% | 2650 | 51% | 5238 | 100% |

| Trends | 1st Week | 2nd Week Jan | 3rd Week Jan | End Jan |
|----------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| Newly Registered | 193 | 141 | | |
| Re-activated | 6 | 58 | | |
| Internally Moving | 0 | 0 | | |
| Returned to Syria | 0 | 0 | | |
| Absent during Distribution | 0 | 0 | | |
| Active Population | 5039 | 5238 | | |

A number of displaced Syrians had crossed into Lebanon earlier but just this week approached our Office. Local mayors and NGOs played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to the UNHCR-HRC teams for registration.

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.

Coordination

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 established to enable the displaced persons to access assistance through specialized partners.

Protection

The vast majority of Syrians who have arrived in the past few weeks have come from Tal Kalakh and 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.

Most of those who have recently arrived have crossed at official border crossings expressing fear of going through the unofficial ones. Residents in the north report that the heavy presence of the Syrian army in border areas, as well as the presence of land mines on the Syrian side prevent more people from fleeing to Lebanon.

UNHCR maintains regular contact with the Lebanese authorities and civil society representatives to follow-up on the security situation of the displaced population in the north of Lebanon. UNHCR has provided guidance to the government on the appropriate treatment of army deserters. A planned training of LAF and ISF remains pending until the authorities confirm a date.

UNHCR continues to follow-up on the cases of Syrians who are detained for illegal entry or stay.

According to UNHCR's estimates, over 150 wounded 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. Is this the current figure

Registration certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC are still on hold.

The certificates are a means to show that the person is someone who is registered with UNHCR and the HRC and is aimed to prevent fraud and facilitate access to needed services.

Circulation permits have also not been issued by the authorities. Displaced Syrians are increasingly worried about their inability to move freely.

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.

Shelter

Most of the displaced Syrians reside with host families. Just over 200 persons are accommodated in three (abandoned) schools: Al-Rama, Al-Ibra and Al-Mouanseh schools. The schools were initially not well equipped (with sanitation and hygiene facilities) to receive large numbers of people but have been 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 Government of Lebanon initiated the renovation of Al Rama, Al Mouanseh, 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 have identified host family residences in pressing need of improvement in preparation for the winter. NRC is providing these families with coupons enabling them to renovate their homes.

Quick impact projects

UNHCR's implementing partner, DRC, has completed the rehabilitation of two public gardens: the first is located in the Social Development Center (SDC) of Amayer and the second next to Moukaybel municipality. In addition, DRC finalized the renovation work and equipment for the public library in Aidamoon village, and the cine-club in Wadi Khaled.

**Distribution
(Food/ NFI)**

UNHCR along with the Government of Lebanon, 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.

| Items Distributed | December 28, 2011 | Cumulative |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Mattresses | 200 | 4,589 |
| Blankets | 0 | 4,857 |
| Food kits | 65 | 5,557 |
| Diapers | 0 | 886 |
| Baby milk | 2 | 1,068 |
| Baby kits | 0 | 424 |
| Hygiene kits | 0 | 3,192 |
| Women's underwear | 0 | 714 |
| Tuition fees | 53 | 465 |
| Books | 53 | 465 |
| Stationary | 75 | 596 |
| Uniforms | 53 | 465 |
| Family kit (kitchen utensils) | 0 | 48 |
| Clothes coupons of 75,000 LBP | 0 | 1,113 |
| Fuel coupons (20 liters) | 48 | 11,745 |

Education

The Minister of Education is facilitating the enrollment of displaced children in public schools. UNHCR is covering the cost of school fees, books, uniforms, notebooks, and stationary. UNHCR and its implementing partner, Save the Children Sweden (SCS), are providing remedial classes for Syrian displaced children given the differences between the Lebanese and Syrian school curricula. A total of 465 displaced children have enrolled into public schools. UNHCR is seeking to improve the school enrolment rate in 2012 by continuing to give awareness sessions to displaced parents on the importance of education, and offering remedial classes to both Lebanese and displaced Syrian children in Wadi Khaled, Tall Bire, and Tripoli.

Health

UNHCR, HRC and the World Health Organization (WHO) have established a referral system so that registered displaced Syrians have access to health care services through the most specialized partner. Public Health 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 up to 85% of diagnostic tests. 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 UNHCR's implementing partner, the International Medical Corp (IMC), reached agreements with five hospitals for discounted rates in the provision of necessary health care. Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) started the implementation of a mental health project jointly with the Makassed Public Health Centre (PHC). A psychologist has been deployed in Makassed's centre to provide mental health counselling to all Wadi Khaled residents, including the displaced. Moreover, IMC has launched a series of trainings to the medical and social staff in the PHCs, Social Development Centres (SDCs) and partner agencies on the best techniques and tools to support persons affected by armed conflict and on psychological first aid. IMC has also provided a basic computer skills training to Al-Makassed primary health centre's employees to improve the reporting procedures on cases in need of primary health care. In parallel, IMC and UNHCR continue to provide pamphlets on vaccination, obstetrics and gynaecology based on the Ministry of Public Health guidelines through the PHCs and SDCs.

Since May, 647 persons have received primary health care services while 256 persons have received secondary healthcare services. Since mid September, the total number of hospital admissions reached 281.

Capacity building

UNCHR has invested in strengthening the capacities of government's and local partners through:

- Regular coordination meetings and joint plans of action;
- Technical and material support to the HRC in regard 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.