



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Interagency Meeting 12/11/2013 at 10 hrs

Attendees:

Ethar Soliman (Care International), Wessam El Hawary (Care International), Steve Weaver (Church World Service), Shane Bristow (Stars), Nancy Baron (PSTIC), Unni Krishnan (Plan International), Iva Tanlu (Plan Egypt), Abdelrahman Hassan (Resala), Samar Saadawy (Resala), Nora Hassanaïen (Save the Children), Mai Gaballah (Save the Children), Heba Kassem (Refugee Centre for Human Rights), Mona Saleh (CRS), Kris H. Ozar (CRS), Terri O'Quinn (WFP), Amira Makram (Refuge Egypt).

UNHCR:

Ahmed Sarhan, Nicole des Remedios, Maamon Abu Arqub, Madalena Hogg, Nshimirimana Marie-Rose, Huda Ali

Chaired by: Elizabeth Tan

Agenda:

Updates from UNHCR

Registration has gone down; about 200 people per day. UNHCR is reaching out to people in governorates outside Greater Cairo. Registration team went to Alexandria late last week and only some 100 people registered. In Damietta only 150 individuals showed interest in registering and 110 in Ismailia. UNHCR will go to Mansoura, where 1,000 individuals have shown interest in registering. Another assessment mission is going to Assiut.

UNHCR had a meeting with the Assistant Minister for Arab Affairs, Nasser Kamel. He explained the necessity to control borders as over 7,500 people have crossed to Europe. He was clear that the authorities will not release persons in detention for illegal exiting of the country. UNHCR brought up issues of family separation and the deportation of unaccompanied minors. Although Ambassador Kamel expressed a willingness to review humanitarian cases, the Government of Egypt (GoE) will continue with their policy.

There was a subtle invitation from MFA to continue and enhance work on education and health. They asked us to work with ministries and governmental institutions and to continue with the QIPs projects.

The Director of International Protection will come on mission from Geneva on 27 November with a letter from the High Commissioner (HC) about protection concerns in Egypt regarding Syrians.

Resettlement (RST) was discussed in the meeting. GoE welcomed the prospect, and UNHCR noted the importance of managing expectations. There are many Syrians and very few places. GoE saw no problem in that.

The protection working-group has been focusing specifically on detention recently. A UNHCR staff member is working with the legal partners who have access to detention centres. UNHCR will continue to establish further contacts in Alexandria. There are 236 Syrians and Palestinians from Syria in 8 detention centres, including Port Said. UNHCR is trying to secure the release of children and extremely vulnerable cases, but no tangible success so far.

IOM started an awareness campaign on regular migration.

Regarding the policy for residencies adopted by the Egyptian authorities, Syrians need to obtain security clearance. Those with yellow cards are not rejected. However, most Syrians get residencies on passport and a few cases of rejections have been documented.

RST: Swedish Minister of Immigration in an interview said Sweden is willing to take Syrian refugees from Egypt if UNHCR refers them. UNHCR had 50 people yesterday asking to be enrolled for RST, and we have detainees in Alex asking if they can be referred. Syrians are not exposed to how RST works and they are therefore vulnerable to exploitation and fraud.

UNHCR had a regional meeting on RST recently: RST of Syrians will start with small numbers to all RST countries. Most of them said they are interested to take Syrians. HC talked about 30,000 Syrians to be resettled as an aspirational figure. Until now only 10,000 are involved. UNHCR Egypt will be involved in RST. It will be challenging to select the appropriate cases and manage expectations.

An information campaign needs to be developed and posted on anti-fraud and awareness-raising regarding services and RST.

Update from partners

Care International:

A workshop on SGBV training will take place on Sunday. There will be experts from USA to train staff.

Regarding work on psychological and SGBV, Care International is contacting local NGO partners.

CRS:

CRS managed to serve 14,000 students. They are moving to a bigger office in Mohandessin to serve a bigger number. Next week an operation will commence in Alex from 19 Nov. until the end of the year.

In the same office they have established a livelihood programme and have trained over one hundred individuals. Some Syrians have already been placed in jobs.

Resala:

Offices in Mansoura and Port Said will start to deliver assistance next month. Resala has distributed food and toys, and conducted some activities for children with the support of PSTIC and Save the Children. Food was distributed last week to 200 families not registered with UNHCR.

Save the Children:

Save the Children organized a coexistence event in November in First Settlement (New Cairo), among a series of workshops on coexistence. The design is based on lessons learned from the first event of coexistence during the recent Eid holiday.

In addition, SC has assisted the community school in Obour in establishing new space. Save the Children is organizing distribution of NFIs for Syrians, and is currently starting a Polio awareness campaign.

WFP:

In September, 98% of the targeted refugees received vouchers. WFP reached only half of the beneficiaries in October because in Cairo there were problems in the distribution. The supermarket WFP works complained of vandalism and theft by beneficiaries.

A new system will be implemented. Distribution will take place over 20 days rather than 6. In addition, WFP is conducting a big campaign on the code of conduct. There were concerns to keep such messaging limited so as not to turn incur further negativity among Egyptian public opinion.

Distribution in Damietta will take place in the next few days, Alexandria will start next week.

The target is to serve 70,000 Syrians. Syrians should be told that services are continuing and that it was only disrupted in October. WFP is working with UNHCR on the one card system.

Plan:

Plan is involved in the QIPs process. However, Plan is still in the process of getting permission and employing international staff.

Stars:

A workshop next Thursday has been organized on protection for Syrians and non-Syrian refugees in Egypt. Discussions will review lessons learned in Egypt and other operations.

PSTIC:

4 active psychosocial workers and 1 housing advocate work with Syrians. PSTIC is currently training 17 new Syrian workers, 6 of them will be in Alex in CBOs that UNICEF supports, and 3 in Port Said and Damietta. The rest will be in greater Cairo. They will start engaging in field work in early December. PSTIC will be scaling up emergency response.

PSTIC asked all partners to seek its support if they have emergency situations, because it has people who are willing to respond quickly in different locations.

Other Notes:

UNHCR asked partners to share info on the polio campaign that will start on 17 November. The campaign is targeting all children in the country, not just refugees.

UNHCR will start winterization through an increase of cash assistance in December. This will target 60,000 individuals through IRW, Resala and Caritas. Winterization will only cover those who receive cash assistance as it already targets the most vulnerable.

A message by CMRS: It will start offering four short courses during January and February 2014:

1. Demographic Methods for Measuring International Migration.
2. Immigration Detention: Challenges of a Growing Trend.
3. Addressing Global Trends: Psychosocial and Mental health Interventions for Refugees Living in the Urban Context.
4. International Refugee Law.

*Next Meeting will take place in 26th November at 10 AM.

*Next non-Syria interagency meeting will be 3rd December.