

LEBANON: Arsal Influx Inter-agency Update

13 February 2014



Arsal

 **35,000**
Resident
Population of Arsal

 **38,000**
Refugees identified
As of 20 December 2013

 **2,750**
Persons arrived
in the last 4 days

 **75,750**
Total population in
Arsal

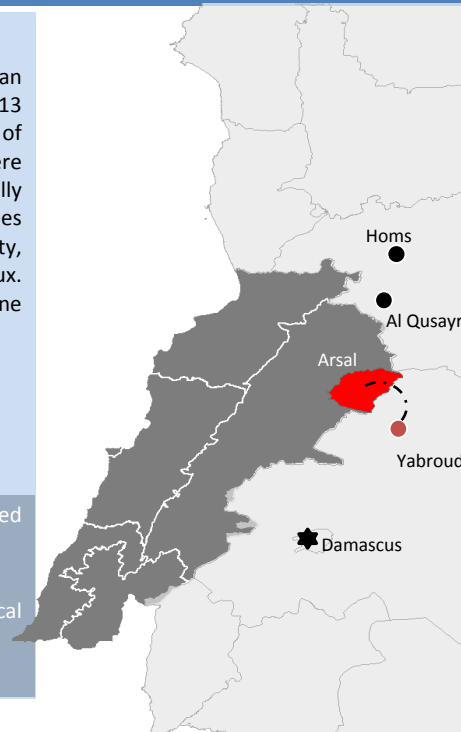
CONTEXT

Humanitarian partners are responding to the arrival of an estimated 500-600 families in Arsal between 10 and 13 February. The new arrivals are coming from the towns of Sahel, Jreijeer, Flita and Yabrud in Qalamoun region, where military operations are reported to have substantially escalated in the last two days. With the flow of refugees expected to continue, and possibly with a higher intensity, humanitarian partners are preparing for a potential influx. To date, there are no reports of new arrivals of Palestine Refugees from Syria.

Humanitarian partners have been on the ground since Tuesday to support municipal authorities. UNHCR is coordinating the inter-agency response under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Partners (Detailed activity breakdown will be shared shortly)

MoSA, Arsal Municipality, ACF, Al Jamaa Al Islamiya, AMEL, BEYOND, DRC, GVC, ICRC, Intersos, IRC, local NGOs, MDM, NRC, SCI, Dar Al Fatwa, HI, IMC, MSF, TDH, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP



Core relief items are provided to newly arrived families in Arsal
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RESPONSE

Protection

Families who are identified to have newly arrived in Arsal are being provided with information by partners. In addition, leaflets have been developed to advise new arrivals on where to go for identification.

A protection desk has been set up for the referral of cases judged as “most vulnerable”, such as unaccompanied minors, separated families, and survivors of gender-based violence. Five unaccompanied minors and separated children were identified since 10 February.

Public Health

There are now 3 functional field hospitals, with another due to be completed by the end of February. Stocks of medicine for 10,000 individuals are expected in the coming days. Vaccination for polio and measles will start shortly, as well as screening of malnutrition cases.

12 weapon-wounded cases have been reported; some have been transferred to medical facilities outside Arsal. With the possible increase in such cases, medical care outside the Bekaa may become necessary.

Shelter and WASH

New arrivals have settled in existing ITS inside Arsal and beyond the LAF checkpoint cordon, as well as in private accommodation. The limited volume of arrivals has not yet required the expansion of existing collective shelters. Partners are working with the local authorities on identifying additional shelter options in case of further influxes. The shelter situation remains extremely challenging. The number of ITS has grown from 6 in October last year to over 30. According to WASH and shelter assessments, many of the informal sites urgently need additional WASH support. Partners are providing latrines and water tanks to alleviate the situation.

Core relief items and Food

Core relief items (hygiene kits, mattresses, blankets, stoves, fuel vouchers, kitchen sets, and baby kits) and food parcels were distributed to alleviate the immediate needs of 428 newly arrived refugee families. A new barcode system which scans IDs/passports was used to speed up identification for distribution. Stocks are in place to respond to further new arrivals.

Challenges

Security concerns led to the interruption of operations of international partners on 12 February, when a vehicle rigged with explosives was intercepted by security forces on Arsal-al Labueh road. Security measures in northern Bekaa have been reinforced as a result.

Next Steps

In case of further security restrictions affecting international agencies, a “buddy system” (whereby international partners are paired with national partners) has been put in place for WASH, shelter and food. Stocks of food and core relief items have been prepositioned.

Given the shortage of shelter options in Arsal, options outside Arsal will need to be explored, particularly in light of the possibility of an influx of up to 50,000 from Yabroud.

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