



Lebanon Update

Situation in North Lebanon

January 28 - February 3 2012



Displaced Syrian Children in class at a local public school in Wadi Khaled – © UNHCR – Dalia Khamissy – November 2011

Highlights of the week

Numbers:

The number of registered Syrians with UNHCR and the High Relief Commission (HRC) is 6,375. Since last week there has been an increase of some 85 persons. This increase does not reflect new arrivals but instead the number of persons who have been in Wadi Khaled or Tripoli for some time and just this week registered with UNHCR-HRC.

Distribution:

The January distribution of food, hygiene kits, milk, winter clothes coupons, toys and fuel continued this week. HRC, Caritas Migrant Center, UNICEF, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and UNHCR provided assistance to the displaced and the most vulnerable of the host families with the help of a number of other partners.

Health:

In collaboration with UNHCR, the International Medical Corps (IMC), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), and the World Health Organization (WHO) organized a first phase training this week on “Health Education and Disease Management” for health care providers supporting displaced Syrians.

Moreover, a field health coordination group consisting of UNHCR, IMC, ICRC, WHO, MSF, the

Security:

The local and displaced communities remain very concerned over the security situation inside Syria. As reports of arms smuggling and border tumult continue, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have increased their presence in the area. Security concerns and incidents include:

- The wounding of a Lebanese child by a land mine (he has since been treated);
- Reports from Wadi Khaled residents of Syrian airplanes flying at a low altitude;
- At least three reported cases of robbery in Andakit and Qobayat;
- Media reports of two Lebanese nationals and one Syrian who went missing in the north and then were reported to have died

Reports of ongoing border security measures in Syria;

Registration certificates to persons registered with UNHCR and HRC are also still on hold and no circulation permits have been issued. Syrian residents in the north continue to feel frustrated at their lack of mobility and consequent inability to find temporary work.

Shelter:

UNHCR and DRC finished painting the walls of the Rama collective shelter that was rehabilitated in 2011. UNHCR and HRC continue to identify additional abandoned

Coalition of Associations in the North and MoSA met this week in the north to discuss the needs and programs for 2012. They agreed to increase coordination between relevant actors to prevent duplication of services. Additional issues discussed included:

- Providing medication and equipment to Public Health Centers
- Monitoring and supporting reproductive health programs to better meet pregnant women's needs
- Administering vaccinations for newborns
- Providing post-operative care for patients
- Expanding the mental health support and ensuring compliance with the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC)

Education:

UNHCR's implementing partner Save the Children Sweden (SCS) reported that 334 students are attending remedial classes on a weekly basis. In addition, recreational activities are ongoing in the established Child Friendly Spaces funded by UNICEF in Wadi Khaled.

Efforts to improve school enrolment and attendance continued and UNHCR, SCS, DRC, and MoSA social workers identified school-aged children who are not enrolled in school. Home visits revealed the following reasons for the low enrolment rate.:

1. difficulty adapting to the Lebanese curriculum especially for children who were also not enrolled in school in Syria;
2. a belief of some parents that they will be able to return to Syrian soon – so find it unnecessary to enroll their children in school;
3. psychological stress which makes parents less willing to try and overcome the difficulties their children may face in school.

UNHCR and partners are working on finding incentives for children to enroll in schools and through remedial classes, help to ensure they remain in class.

structures that can be used as collective shelters in the future.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs):

UNHCR and DRC met with the local community to decide on future QIPs that could benefit both the displaced and the local community.

UNHCR and DRC organized a two-day training, in collaboration with the Assabil Association to teach the procedures for archiving books and managing a public library. Fourteen participants from the village of Aydamoun attended the training and have started classifying the books by subject in the public library.

In addition, as part of the community empowerment projects, UNHCR and DRC installed and equipped a kitchen in the Association for Development of Women's center in Mashta Hammoud. The kitchen will serve meals to displaced and Lebanese children attending remedial classes and receiving psycho-social support.

Community Services:

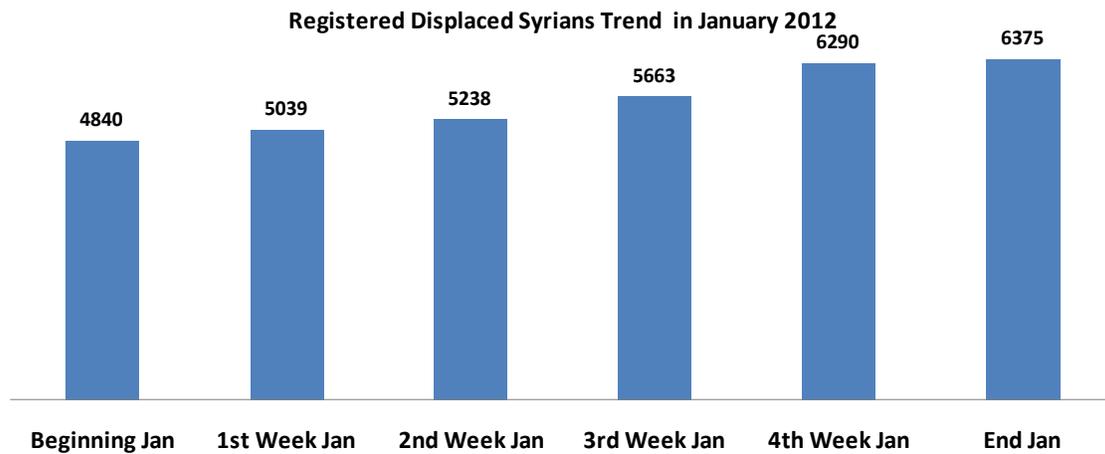
The Individual Case Management Committee (ICMC) composed of UNHCR, DRC, and MoSA, in addition to other specialized partners, met to improve the assistance provided to persons with specific needs (These include persons with disabilities, unaccompanied children, unaccompanied elderly, vulnerable persons, survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and victims of torture).

The ICMC went on home visits and provided 15 persons with special needs with targeted support including equipment for persons with disabilities, psychological counseling and medical assistance.

Situational Overview

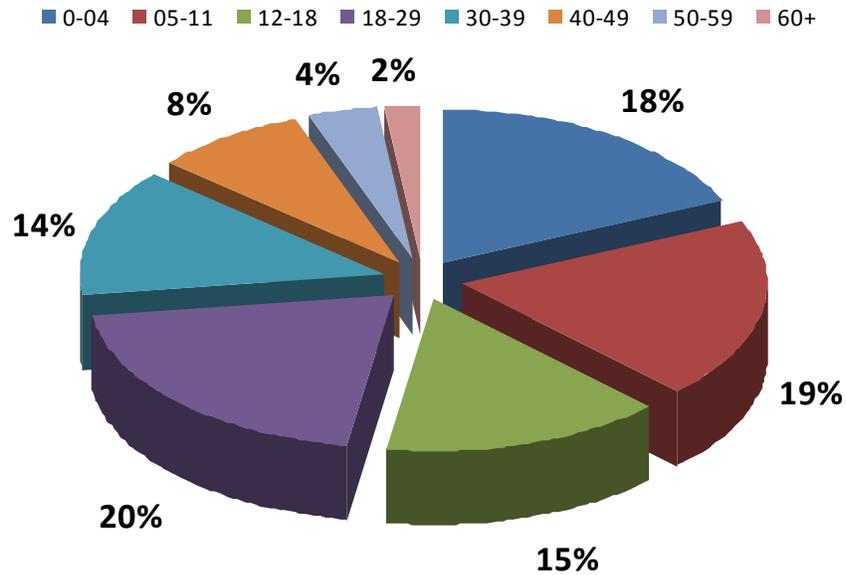
Beginning in April 2011, Lebanon witnessed an influx of some 5,000 Syrian refugees into northern Lebanon. Many subsequently returned to Syria, while others relocated inside Lebanon. Cumulatively, since April 2011, UNHCR and the HRC registered and assisted over 11,000 persons. Currently there are 6,375 persons (1,215 households) 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 return home until the situation stabilizes.



Trends	1st Week	2nd Week Jan	3rd Week Jan	4th Week Jan	End Jan
Newly Registered	193	141	405	607	85
Re-activated	6	58	20	25	0
Internally Moving	0	0	0	0	0
Returned to Syria	0	0	0	0	0
Absent during Distribution	0	0	0	0	0
Active Population	5039	5328	5663	6290	6375

Total Breakdown of Displaced Syrians by Age



A number of displaced Syrians crossed into Lebanon earlier but just this week approached our Office. Local mayors and NGOs played an active role in referring displaced Syrians to 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 were established to enable the displaced persons to access assistance through specialized partners.

Protection

The vast majority of Syrians arriving to Lebanon 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 Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (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, of which there are relatively few, underscoring the positive humanitarian approach maintained by the authorities

According to UNHCR's estimates, over 159 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.

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.

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.

UNHCR and partners have established ten child-friendly places in Wadi Khaled. These spaces are meant to be safe spaces where children can engage in games and activities such as theater.

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, 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 have identified host family residences in pressing need of improvement in preparation for the winter. NRC has begun to provide these families with coupons enabling them to renovate their homes.

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**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	February 2nd, 2012	Cumulative
Mattresses	0	4,589
Blankets	0	4,857
Food kits	356	5,913
Diapers	0	886
Baby milk	88	1,310
Baby kits	0	424
Hygiene kits	0	3,960
Women's underwear	0	714
Tuition fees	465	465
Books	465	465
Stationary	75	596
Uniforms	465	465
Family kit (kitchen utensils)	0	48
Clothes coupons of 75,000 LBP	185	1,298
Clothes by Unicef	9	21
Toys by Unicef	15	63
Fuel coupons of 20 litres	1,500	18,225

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 the displaced Syrian 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. UNICEF and Save the Children Sweden are supporting five safe spaces in the area of Wadi Khaled where children can play. These spaces are located in public schools, shelters, and NGO centers. Teachers, social workers and community facilitators have been trained on how to manage recreational activities and integrate psychosocial support in dealing with children in these safe spaces.

Health

UNHCR, HRC and UNHCR's implementing partner International Medical Corps (IMC) 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 the cost of doctor consultations for women and children and up to 85 % of diagnostic tests for all displaced persons. 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. Medecins sans Frontieres (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 in Makassed's centre to provide mental health counselling to all Wadi Khaled residents, including the displaced.

To date, there have been 334 hospital admissions since September 19 mostly covered by HRC of which 257 patients, while 699 patients have received primary health care in different health centres and mobile medical units.

UNHCR conducted a specialized health mission to the north to review current services and needs. Initial observations note that there remains a gap in the provision of chronic medications. In addition, the use of a health information system and a health referral mechanism are needed at the field level. The World Health Organization together with UNHCR is liaising with MoPH, IMC, MSF and other partners to address these different gaps. An action plan is forthcoming.

Capacity building

UNCHR 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 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.