

LEBANON: Arsal Influx Inter-Agency Update

29 November 2013



Arsal

 **35,000**
Resident
Population of Arsal

 **20,025**
Registered Refugees
As of 26 November 2013

 **20,000**
Refugees registered with
the local municipality
since 15 November 2013

 **75,025**
Total population in
Arsal

CONTEXT

Humanitarian partners are responding to an influx of more than 3,400 refugee families following heavy fighting between the Syrian Armed Forces and Armed Opposition Groups in the Qalamoun area of Rif Dimashq, Syria. Heavy clashes which began on 15 November in Qarah, have now spread to many neighbouring villages.

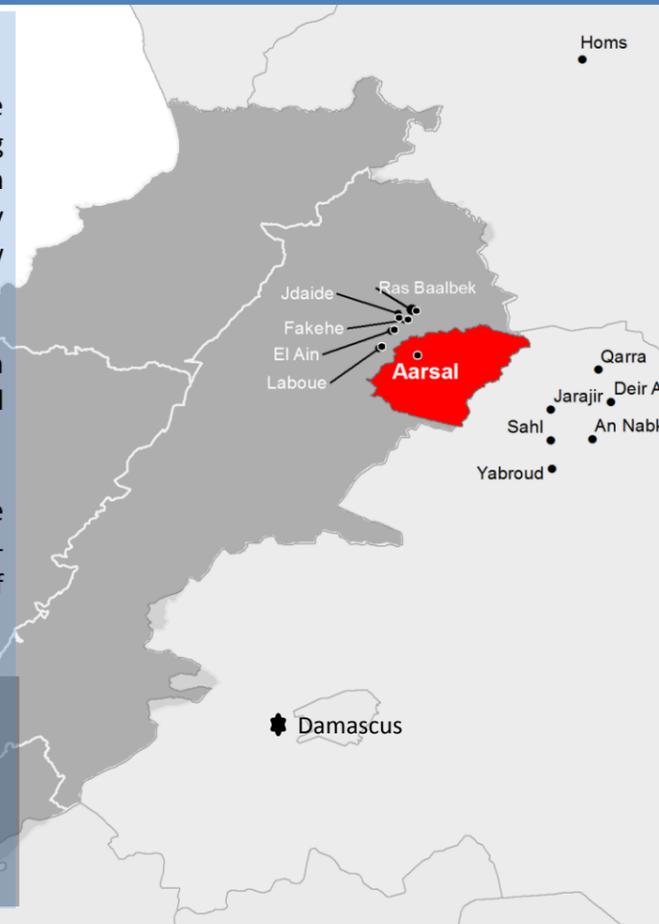
The majority of refugees have found shelter in Arsal, with others now accommodated in the neighbouring villages of El Ain, Fakehe, Chaat and Ras Baalbek.

Humanitarian partners have been on the ground since the beginning of the influx. UNHCR is coordinating the inter-agency response under the direction of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

HIGHLIGHTS

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees visited Arsal today and expressed deep appreciation for the continued generosity of local communities

He also praised the work of all partners participating in relief efforts and highlighted the need for support to the Government



UN High Commissioner for Refugees meets refugees at Temporary Shelter Site, Arsal 2013-11-29 © UNHCR

RESPONSE

Protection

(DRC, TdH, IRC, MOSA, NRC, TdH, UNHCR, UNICEF)

The general situation remained stable with just under 100 families arriving over the last couple of days. Partners planned for mobile registration to reach vulnerable unregistered refugees, starting with families living in unfinished buildings. Shelter and protection specialists will join mobile registration teams to identify and respond to specific needs. UNHCR and the Arsal municipality are also preparing to cross-check registration information to prevent duplication and better inform the provision of assistance. Information campaigns have been initiated to ensure that refugees, especially women and children, are aware of assistance and services available to them.

Shelter and WASH

(ACF, Dar el Fatwa, Intersos, IOM, Municipality, MOSA, NRC, Save the Children, TdH, UNHCR, UNICEF)

The recently established protection desk has helped to assess over 76 families and prioritize the most vulnerable cases for the next available shelter. An additional three tents have been pitched on the temporary shelter site to accommodate further vulnerable families.

Water quality spot checks in collective shelters, the temporary shelter site and in tented settlements have shown that the level of chlorine is sufficient to fend off bacteriological contamination. Partners continue providing water filters to individual households where centralized chlorination is not possible. So far, over 400 filters have been distributed.

Core Relief Items and Food Security

(Amel, Al Jamaa Al Islamiya, Arsal Municipality, DAF, DRC, GVC, IOM, IRC, Jousour Al Nour, KSA Relief, Prince of Qatar Aid, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP)

Distribution resumed on Thursday with the easing of security restrictions. The vast majority of newly arriving refugees have now been reached (over 3,300 households) with food and essential items for sleeping, cooking, personal hygiene and keeping warm, through a coordinated effort of several partners.

Public Health

(AMEL, Beyond, HI, ICRC, IMC, MDM, MOSA, MSF, MOPH, SHRO, UNHCR, UNICEF)

The malnutrition survey which started at the beginning of the week has so far led to the identification of 5 children with malnutrition. All persons were assisted immediately.

Partners have identified the need to strengthen services for pregnant women as well as to increase the coverage of mobile medical units (MMU) as many people are unable to reach established health centres. A schedule for MMU visits has been agreed to ensure the best possible outreach. Vaccinations against polio, measles and the provision of vitamin A continue.

Challenges

The protection desk has identified a small number of families with pressing shelter needs. Alternative shelter options are urgently needed to avoid deteriorations in wellbeing. The threat of eviction from collective shelters is an ongoing concern.

The recent multisectoral assessment showed that 1,200 families need support in preparing their shelters for winter conditions. To date 300 families have been supported with sealing off kits, and partners have stock to assist another 450 families. Additional supplies are urgently needed to ensure that refugees are protected from winter weather.

Next steps

Training and sensitization on referral pathways to available services will be expanded to ensure that local actors and humanitarian partners give the best possible information to refugees.

Partners are exploring possibilities for relocating refugees to more sustainable shelter options as they become available. This will involve joint advocacy with local authorities to enable the movement of refugees who do not have full documentation, and discussions with refugees currently located in the temporary shelter site.

Following a joint security mission to Arsal, partners are working to improve coordination and reporting on security incidents, including improved coordination between NGOs and the UN security system.

For more information: Jean-Nicolas Beuze + 961 79160195 beuze@unhcr.org