



Palestinian children in a gathering. Source: UNDP

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- UNDP and partners support Palestine refugees in the 'gatherings'
- Needs outstrip resources for people with disabilities
- New alert system allows prompt response to harsh weather in the North
- Innovative project addresses refugee men's protection needs
- London Pledging Conference mobilizes funds for Lebanon

## People in Need

### Palestinian gatherings in Lebanon: When refugees become host communities

Palestinians in Lebanon, one of the country's most vulnerable communities, face increasing challenges as they host and support high numbers of Palestine refugees who have fled Syria. The 42 Palestinian 'gatherings' – informal communities of refugees located outside the boundaries of the 12 official refugee camps – are among the most deprived host communities in Lebanon. Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and from Syria (PRS) live in precarious conditions in overcrowded areas amid poverty, insufficient services, and limited access to income-generating activities. High unemployment rates have been amplified by the refugee influx which is fostering increased competition over resources, services and jobs, occasionally leading to social tensions.

## FIGURES (29 February 2016)

# of refugees 1,067,785

52.5% ♀ 47.5% ♂ 53% 👤

# of returnees 35,000

# of Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) 40,807

# of Palestine Refugees from Lebanon (PRL) 277,985

# of targeted host communities 1,500,000

Total Lebanese population 4.4 M

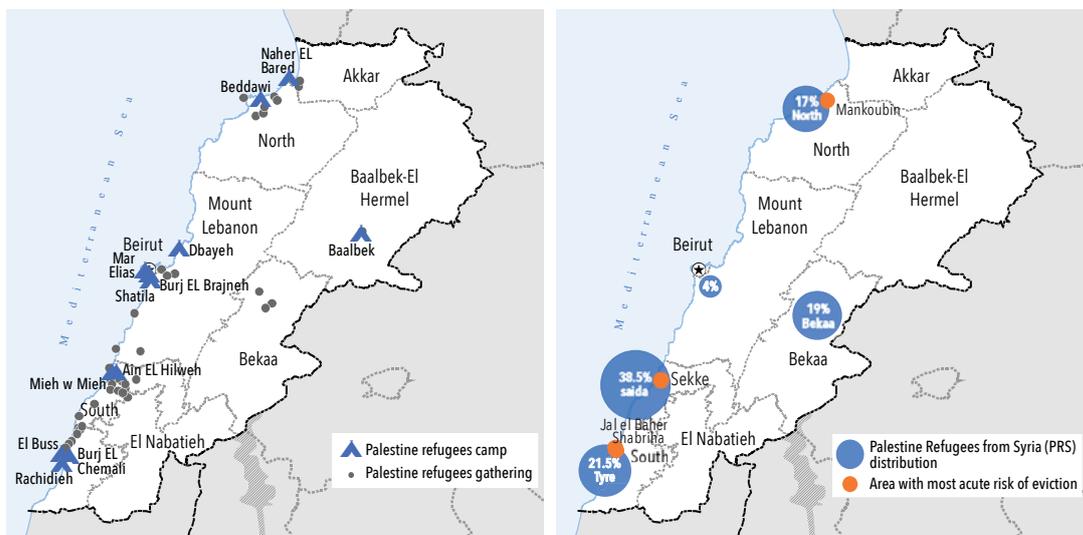
## FUNDING

(Extracted from FTS)

LCRP 2016

US\$ 2.48 billion requested

4.2% funded



The approximately 140,000 Palestinians in the gatherings – who are among the 320,000 Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Lebanon – face a number of stark challenges. These include the lack of services, as UNRWA only provides basic urban services inside the refugee camps; eviction threats, as Palestinians are not allowed to own property in Lebanon; severe restrictions in the labour market; and the lack of communal spaces for children and youth. Humanitarian data and needs assessments on these communities are scarce, and protection monitoring visits irregular because of a shortage of partners working in the gatherings.

UNDP and partners are working with municipalities nonetheless to cover some of these gaps by providing some urban services and upgrading shelters and hygiene conditions in the gatherings. In the new initiative 'Empowering Local Women Health Educators', UNDP and the national NGO Beit Atfal Assumoud are starting a project to train 110 women (80 per cent Palestinian and 20 per cent Lebanese) in 20 Palestinian gatherings on hygiene, sexual and reproductive health rights. The training is covering areas including sexual abuse, domestic violence, gender-based violence and child protection. The women will serve as focal points on protection services, and will be paid to transfer their skills to other women through

*Women in 20 Palestinian gatherings will be trained as health educators as part of a new project starting in March 2016.*

awareness sessions and community development. This intervention builds on previous UNDP hygiene activities for women in the gatherings. Among other recent initiatives, the Welfare Association and PARD are supporting livelihood opportunities in nine gatherings by providing compost to enable families to grow fruit and vegetables. The Gatherings Working Group, chaired by UNDP, convenes monthly to coordinate the response and identify gaps and challenges.



Around **140,000** Palestine refugees live in **42** Palestinian “gatherings” across Lebanon, including approximately 26,000 Palestine Refugees from Syria (UNDP, May 2014)



**23** per cent of **Palestine Refugees in Lebanon** and **53** per cent of **Palestine Refugees from Syria** in Lebanon are **unemployed**



More than **70 per cent** of refugees living in gatherings do not have access to **adequate water and sanitation** facilities (UNDP 2014).



In 2015, UNDP rehabilitated **300 Palestine Refugees in Lebanon** and **300 Palestine Refugees from Syria** shelters. Another **1,500** PRL shelters **still need rehabilitation**

### Syria crisis has strong impact on people with disabilities

*Older persons, persons suffering from trauma, and persons with disabilities are often among the most vulnerable within a community.*

Persons with disabilities, both within the refugee population and the Lebanese host community, are particularly affected by the consequences of the ongoing conflict in Syria amid the severe strain on basic services in the country.

According to the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR 2015), approximately 30,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon have a physical or mental disability, and almost 7 percent of refugee households have at least one working age member with a disability. Organizations working on disabilities estimate that the real figure is likely to be higher – the 2014 report by Handicap International, ‘Hidden Victims of the Syria Crisis’, estimated that 20 percent of Syrian refugees (or around 200,000 people) had an impairment. Organizations attribute the under-reporting of disabilities to several factors, including limitations in the identification/registration process and the “exclusion” of people with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, from needs assessments.

With another 93,000 Lebanese carrying a disability card, the needs of the disabled exceed the available services in Lebanon, especially in terms of assistive devices, rehabilitation services and mental health care. Older persons, persons suffering from trauma, and persons with disabilities are often among the most vulnerable in any community.

Programmes to support persons with disabilities include rehabilitation services and assistive devices provided by the World Rehabilitation Fund (WRF), Handicap International (HI), Fundacion Promocion Social de la Cultura (FPSC), and the Movement for Peace (MPDL), among others. Community-based and local NGOs such as Arc-en-ciel, Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union (LPHU), and others have also been providing rehabilitation services in host communities across Lebanon. Despite these initiatives, however, rehabilitation needs significantly exceed the available services, especially in terms of specialized rehabilitation services and mental health care.

A ‘Disability and Older Age Working Group’ (DaOAWG) was established in Lebanon in June 2013 to advocate for the rights and needs of persons with disabilities among refugees and within host communities, and for their inclusion in the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis. It has also been advocating for comprehensive assessments on the number of refugees with disabilities, their geographical distribution, types of disabilities, and needs. Support from the Protection Working Group has enabled the inclusion of disability and older age issues in several emergency assistance plans, including the LCRP for 2016.

## Humanitarian response

### New alert system triggers rapid response to winter storm in northern Lebanon

*The alert system allows prompt assistance to communities in northern Lebanon affected by extreme weather.*

Vulnerable families in 80 informal settlements across Akkar and the North have received winter assistance following an 'Orange Alert' triggered in mid-January. The new alert system, introduced by UNHCR this winter as part of inter-agency coordination, warns humanitarians of extreme weather forecast to enable them to promptly assist affected communities in northern Lebanon.

UNHCR triggers a colour-coded alert by email and sms when there is heavy snowfall, rain or stormy weather forecast (see graph). Following orange or red alerts, NGOs visit and assess all the sites in their area of responsibility within 48 hours and identify the assistance required in areas including shelter, WASH and non-food items. The organization doing the assessment usually responds to most of the needs (with interventions ranging from weatherproofing to blanket distributions and desludging) and refers any gaps to the relevant partner for follow-up and intervention.

<b>Red alert</b>	torrential rain, high winds (>40km/h), heavy snowfall (>10 cm/24h) or thunderstorms	activation of Extreme Weather response plan (deployment of teams to assess all sites in the affected area)
<b>Orange alert</b>	intense rain, high winds (>30km/h), snowfall (5-10cm/24h) or medium-level lightning strikes	activation of Extreme Weather response plan (deployment of teams to assess all sites in the affected area)
<b>Yellow alert</b>	heavy rain, medium winds (20-30km/h), snowfall (<5cm in 24h), low-level lightning strikes	partners monitor the weather conditions

*257,250 vulnerable people have been prioritized to receive assistance in the Interagency Winter Support Plan for 2015/2016 which started in November.*

Following the January alert, Solidarités, Save the Children, DRC, Concern and other partners undertook rapid assessments in their areas and responded within days. Among the largest interventions, Concern distributed 418 tarpaulins and 619 blankets in 30 affected sites, while Première Urgence responded in 4 sites with heavy sealing and waterproofing kits. MoSA also distributed more than 600 plastic sheets in Akkar and Minnieh-Dennieh. Despite a few initial challenges in getting the information out to the right people, partners say the alert system is proving to be an effective and innovative way to monitor and respond to extreme weather in Akkar and the North.

Overall, 257,250 households have been identified as economically vulnerable and exposed to the cold in Lebanon, and therefore prioritized to receive assistance in the Interagency Winter Support Plan for 2015/2016 which started in November last year. Winterization interventions have included the distribution of cash vouchers and fuel vouchers for families living in altitude, as well as weatherproofing for substandard buildings and site improvements in informal settlements.

### Pilot project works with men to prevent violence

*The project engages 400 men and boys on conflict prevention through participatory approaches.*

An innovative project by the INGO Concern Worldwide is bringing together Syrian and Lebanese men to address, prevent and respond to conflict and violence in northern Lebanon. The project, 'Mitigating Protection Risks of Highly Vulnerable Population in North Lebanon', started in 2015 with Irish Aid support and is now being funded with \$120,000 from the Humanitarian Pooled Fund.

Fourteen groups (consisting of around 280 individuals) have already completed the three-month training, with another six groups due to take part in the project over the next six months. The groups mix different generations of Syrian and Lebanese men and place a strong emphasis on community participation, community-driven projects and intercommunity dialogue. The involvement of Syrian volunteers as trainers is a key element of the project, as it will ensure that the philosophy and approach of the training continue to be replicated after all 400 men and boys have gone through the programme.

Recognizing that Syrian and Lebanese men affected by the Syria conflict tend to use violence as a negative coping strategy to address their feelings of powerlessness, the project works with communities across the North Governorate to engage men and boys on conflict prevention through participatory approaches. It promotes non-violent coping mechanisms, peaceful conflict resolution and gender equality, with a particular focus on gender-based violence and child exploitation.

The vulnerabilities of refugee men in Lebanon were highlighted by the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) 'Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugee Men in Lebanon', released in January 2016, which calls for a stronger focus on the protection needs of refugee men as part of the response in Lebanon. The report notes that refugee men often feel powerless and frustrated in their interactions with others, and recommends (among other points) the implementation of peer support activities for men. The Concern project, as the first in Lebanon to engage men in fighting violence against women, is a key example of an innovative activity addressing men's protection needs through direct community participation.



Men attending a group session. Source: Concern Worldwide

## Funding

### London Conference raises significant funds for Lebanon

*The London conference raised a record sum of over US\$11 billion in pledges.*

The conference 'Supporting Syria and the Region' organised in London on 4 February and co-hosted by the United Kingdom, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, and the United Nations, have raised significant new funding to meet the immediate and longer-term needs of people affected by the Syria crisis.

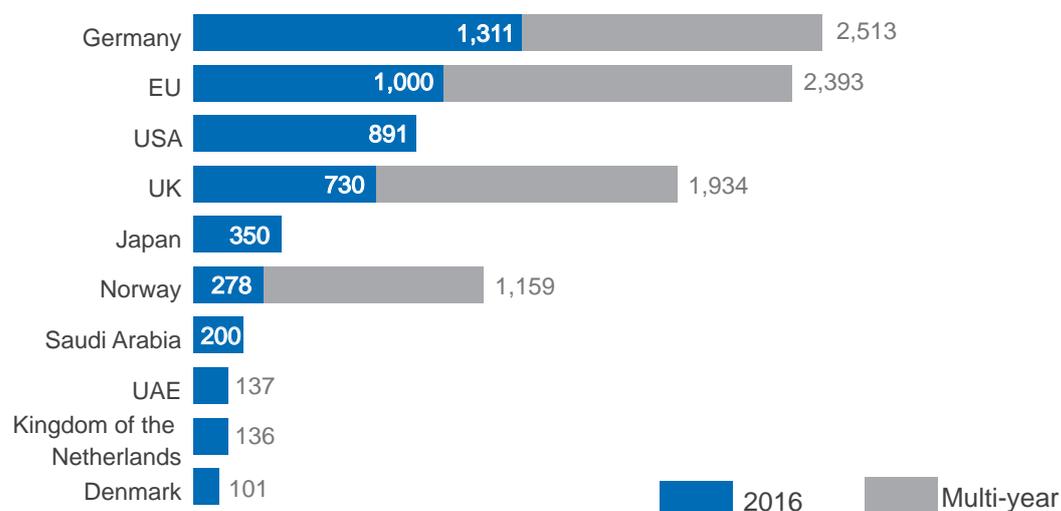
The conference raised a record sum of over US\$ 11 billion in pledges – \$5.8 billion for 2016 and a further \$5.4 billion for 2017-20 to enable partners to plan ahead.

Work has started to track the pledges and further disaggregate them to determine Lebanon's share and where the funding will go. During the pledging conference, several donors made specific commitments to Lebanon, including the UK, US and France in support of education.

The top five donors included Germany with \$2.5 billion, the EU with \$2.4 billion, the UK with \$1.9 billion, Norway with \$ 1.2 billion and the US with \$891 million. However, in per capita terms, the top contributors are Norway with \$226, Kuwait with \$80, Luxemburg with \$74, Qatar with \$47 and Germany with \$31 per capita.

### London Conference: Top 10 donors to Syria and the region

total sum pledged in million US\$



Updated figures from the Financial Tracking System indicate that at the end of 2015, almost \$1.3 billion had been contributed as humanitarian funding to Lebanon, of which \$1.17 billion was received under the LCRP. This means the revised appeal of \$1.87 billion is now 62.9 per cent funded.

## Story

### Supporting livelihoods in Palestinian gatherings through vocational training

“I became the main breadwinner for my family, consisting of my mother, younger brother and I, when my father died in December 2014,” says Jala, a 19-year-old inhabitant of the Maashouk Palestinian gathering.

In order to be able to support his family, Jala enrolled in a five-month vocational training run by the NGO PARD and the Asfari Foundation to provide young Palestinians with an accredited diploma from the Ministry of Education.

“I attended the PARD barber vocational training course from February to June 2015,” he says. “In July, I used my savings to open a barber shop in my father's electricity shop. Since then, I have many clients and generate enough income to support my family. I hope to further develop my shop in the future.”

Jala is one of 140 youth between 14 and 21 who received accredited diplomas in 2015 thanks to the PARD training – half of them Palestine Refugees in Lebanon and half of them Palestine Refugees from Syria. With modules including mobile phone maintenance, air conditioner maintenance and hairdressing/barber skills, as many as 75 per cent of the participants have found jobs after attending the training. The next phase of the project has just been launched, and will run from January to June 2016 with added modules in secretarial skills, accountancy and photography. The training will benefit 100 Palestine Refugee students in nine gatherings.

*75 per cent of the participants found jobs after attending the training.*

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