



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

LEBANON



LEBANON UPDATE

February-March 2025

UNHCR and partners distributing relief items to returning Lebanese displaced families in South Lebanon. © UNHCR/Houssam Hariri

92,825

Internally displaced people
in Lebanon.
(source: IOM/DTM)

953,697

Persons who moved from place of
displacement
(source: IOM/DTM)

354,900

Syrians have crossed back into
Syria from neighbouring countries
in the region since early December
2024
(source: UNHCR)

106,000

Lebanese and refugee arrivals
from Syria since 8 December
(source: DRM)

Situation overview

- Since the fall of the Assad regime, [an estimated 354,900 Syrians](#) have crossed back into Syria from neighbouring countries in the region. However, this figure does not represent verified, permanent returns to Syria, as movements across borders are porous, pendular and many are known to be moving to Syria on temporary visits to assess the situation in their areas of origin before taking a decision to return home.
- Masnaa official crossing point (OCP) in the Bekaa continues to be the main official crossing point into Syria. In North Lebanon, the Arida Official Crossing Point (OCP) remains closed since 3 February as public works are ongoing. Additionally, movements continue to take place across borders through unofficial crossing points.
- The situation remains complex and fluid, with many variables at play. Refugees have expressed hope about the prospect of returning to their homes, while also showing hesitancy given the uncertain near and long-term outlook in Syria, with considerations such as access to education, livelihoods, housing land and property issues and ability to access humanitarian assistance in Syria.
- Since the fall of the regime in Syria on 8 December, new arrivals have entered Lebanon, including approximately 91,000 Syrians and Lebanese to Baalbek Governorate in the Bekaa, as well as over 15,000 recent new arrivals to the North of the country fleeing recent violence in Syria's coastal areas as of 17 March 2025.



UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR continues to respond to the needs of **refugees and Lebanese displaced across Lebanon, returning IDPs within Lebanon and new arrivals from Syria**, by providing protection services, emergency cash assistance, core relief items, access to safe shelter, health care, and psychosocial support.

VOLUNTARY RETURN

- UNHCR released its [Operational Framework for Voluntary Return](#), which outlines UNHCR's plans to assist the voluntary return of Syrian refugees and IDPs to their homes and to support their reintegration in areas of origin. UNHCR in Lebanon and humanitarian partners will plan for an estimated 400,000 Syrian refugees assisted with voluntary return to Syria from Lebanon as a best case scenario.
- On 6 February, UNHCR published the 10th [Flash Regional Survey on Syrian Refugees' Perceptions and Intentions on Return to Syria](#). In Lebanon, 24 per cent of respondents expressed an intention to return within the next 12 months.
- UNHCR is engaging with the Government of Lebanon and through inclusive partnerships, on creating pathways for voluntary return, anchored in protection principles and guided by the voices of refugees, to ensure that Syrian refugees who, fully informed, voluntarily choose to return home are supported to do so; and that international protection is secured for those Syrian refugees who choose to remain in Lebanon. This includes structured mechanisms that enables refugees to have access to objective and up-to-date information on return and facilitates support and targeted assistance with other actors who are part of the Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG). Moreover, UNHCR Lebanon has also reinforced information to refugees on voluntary return through the [UNHCR Lebanon Help Page](#) and community structures, as well as the provision of return counselling through its National Call Centre.

RESPONSE TO IMPACT OF CONFLICT

- UNHCR is coordinating closely with the authorities and other humanitarian organizations, and providing protection services, emergency cash assistance, core relief items, access to safe shelter, health care, and psychosocial support for those who remain in displacement.
- In February, UNHCR and partners supported 7,214 Syrian refugees with Emergency Cash Assistance (EPCA), a one-off lump sum payment to prevent, mitigate or reduce an emergency that exposes an individual or household to serious harm or risks. EPCA is used to support families, living outside of collective sites that have been displaced or affected by the conflict and who are facing an immediate protection risk, for example, homelessness, and/or who have a family member with a specific vulnerability, for example, a family member with a disability or dependent older persons.
- In Beirut and Mount Lebanon, UNHCR and partners provided 1,100 secondary displaced Syrian refugees and Lebanese with core relief items (CRIs) including blankets, mattresses, jerry cans, kitchen sets and solar lamps.
- In North Lebanon, some 8,900 Syrian refugees living outside of collective shelters were supported with CRIs.
- In total, 26 community centres are currently open to receive refugees, Lebanese IDPs, and host community members across the country. The centres provide communities with opportunities to engage in and benefit from various activities including case management, psychosocial support, information, awareness sessions and skills-development. Of the 26 centres, six are Social Development Centres (SDCs) affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs in South Lebanon through which UNHCR-local NGOs provide community-based protection activities.
- Across the country, 517 Outreach Volunteers (OVs) are identifying and referring displaced persons at heightened risk for specialized interventions, as well as reaching refugees with information and community support. Families urgently need assistance to secure basic needs, cover rent, find adequate shelter, and afford for healthcare related costs - especially those with serious medical conditions or those requiring chronic medications - mostly in the South and Beirut and Mount Lebanon. By end of February, OVs referred over 3,000 persons at heightened risk (almost 35% are displaced) and reached over 24,000 people.
- Through its referral healthcare programme, UNHCR and its partners supported 2,650 refugees, ensuring they have continuous access to a comprehensive healthcare package.
- UNHCR and partners provided financial assistance to some 6,500 Lebanese IDPs and Syrian refugees who cannot safely return home. This cash for shelter funding will address urgent shelter needs, including minor repairs and utility costs while residing in host or rental accommodations.
- In South Lebanon, UNHCR and partners continued providing core relief items including blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets, solar lamps, sleeping mats, winter jackets, stoves and hygiene kits to over 31,000 Lebanese and refugees. Additionally, some 4,125 people received shelter kits which will be used to fix damaged houses to permit weatherproofing against the elements.

RESPONSE FOR NEW ARRIVALS

- Considering the rapidly changing dynamics and evolving context in the country, UNHCR continues to monitor the population movements, and engage with refugee and Lebanese returnees' communities to respond to the most immediate humanitarian needs and track intentions and ensure dissemination of relevant information to the communities.
- Due to hostilities in the coastal areas of Syria in early March, over **15,000 Syrians have already fled to the north of Lebanon**, arriving to 25 different locations in Akkar and North Governorates.
- As of 13 March, Baalbek Disaster Risk Management is reporting approximately 91,937 arrivals from Syria since 8 December, including 34,345 in 200 informal collective shelters (139 full) with 57,592 in the community including 20,000 Lebanese returns; these numbers have remained quite static since the group first entered in early December 2024. A household profiling exercise is currently underway with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and UNHCR's partner Intersos in Hermel and Baalbek governorates. So far, 4,200 households have been profiled, with the aim, to identify needs and refer the most vulnerable individuals to the available assistance programmes. Through the Basic Assistance Sector, UNHCR and partners provided core relief items including blankets, mattresses, winter clothes and pillows to some 1,140 families in collective shelters in addition to providing basic protection services and referrals for people with specific needs.
- At the request of the Government, UNHCR has included provisions in its Referral Health Care Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure new arrivals have access to life-saving hospitalization care. In February, 36 new arrivals received hospitalization care in UNHCR-contracted hospitals.

IMPACT OF UNDER FUNDING

UNHCR, alongside the entire humanitarian community, is experiencing an overall unexpectedly large and swift downturn in funding in 2025; the organization is 12% funded as of 15 March 2025. Funding uncertainty and limited visibility on substantial funding projections is already forcing difficult decisions on activities possible to support, with UNHCR Lebanon focusing primarily on lifesaving and core mandate activities with both flexible and earmarked funds available.

A number of those in need will no longer receive support, while crucial activities around supporting return and those still in Lebanon may be deeply affected if more funds cannot be found:

- The WFP-UNHCR joint cash programme will have to discontinue nearly 670,000 additional people in April if funding is not found, after significant cuts were already made early in the year.
- Support for return related activities for up to 400,000 people may be in jeopardy if support for planning and assistance is not forthcoming.
- 93,000 IDPs and returnees can no longer receive shelter or protection cash support.
- 15,000 people can no longer receive mental health support
- 15,000 children will no longer benefit from community-based learning and education retention support
- Institutional support has been substantially reduced, including curtailing all community support projects for refugee hosting areas

FUNDING | UNHCR is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to this operation

Australia | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Italy | Japan | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Central Emergency Response Fund

Other softly earmarked or unearmarked contributions:

Australia | Belgium | Denmark | Ireland | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Norway | Republic of Korea | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island

CONTACT Juliette Stevenson | Senior External Relations Officer | stenenso@unhcr.org | Beirut, Lebanon
Fabien Faivre | External Relations Officer | faivre@unhcr.org | Beirut, Lebanon