

LEBANON

3rd Quarter Update, July - September 2017



A UNHCR staff speaks with Syrian refugee Suzanne, 32, as she holds her six-month-old baby Mona, in a rehabilitated substandard building in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon. UNHCR/David Azia

Operational Context

Around one million Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR Lebanon. In addition, several hundred thousand Syrians in need of protection are unregistered, due to the suspension of UNHCR registration by a Government decision in 2015. Refugees live across more than 1,700 locations throughout the country. Some 21,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from countries other than Syria are also registered with UNHCR, more than 80 per cent of whom originate from Iraq. The vast majority of the non-Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers live in the Beirut and Mount Lebanon governorates.

UNHCR's priority areas include ensuring access to protection, legal stay and birth and civil status documentation for refugees. This encompasses their protection against *refoulement*, preserving the dignity and well-being of refugees while in exile in Lebanon, with priority given to refugees with specific needs and vulnerabilities. It also includes preserving the hospitality of Lebanese host communities and overall social stability, and facilitating refugees' attainment of durable solutions in the form of resettlement and complementary forms of admission to third countries.

UNHCR continues to advocate with all relevant ministries on the importance of resuming registration. Ongoing verification ensures the reliability of registration data for appropriate protection and assistance interventions and planning.

UNHCR leads the refugee response within the inter-agency coordination structure, contributing to the development of sector activities, and coordinating closely with the Government in the implementation of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). At the sector level, UNHCR is co-leading the Protection, Basic Assistance, Health, Shelter and Social Stability Sectors, and supports information management for all sectors.

Update on achievements

Preserving access to protection

Throughout the third quarter, UNHCR continued to follow-up on the General Directorate for General Security's (GSO) March 2017 decision to waive fees for **residence permit** renewal of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR. Following this decision, UNHCR rapidly expanded its registration capacity to swiftly provide refugees with the required documentation for residency renewal. As a result, by the end of the third quarter, some 53 per cent of registered refugees in Lebanon had their registration certificates renewed and close to 160,000 housing attestations have been issued.

UNHCR is also working to support the GSO in scaling up its capacity to issue residence permits to a higher number of Syrians, who are now able to renew their residency as a result of the fee waiver. UNHCR has committed to provide capacity support to an initial 16 GSO renewal centres. By the end of the third quarter, capacity upgrades in two GSO centres have been completed, and the joint plan for upscaling of the additional centres identified was under implementation. The capacity support provided will enable secure and efficient residency documentation renewal through the installation of a complete biometric enrolment and resident card personalization software.

Inconsistencies have been noted in the implementation of the GSO decision, which UNHCR is seeking to overcome in close coordination with the GSO team.

The residency renewal fee waiver is not extended to non-Syrians, who commonly cite high renewal fees and the inability to find a sponsor as the primary impediments to legalizing their stay. To the extent possible, UNHCR aims to assist all persons of concern to regularize their stay, including by assisting the most vulnerable in the renewal procedure.

UNHCR and partners continue to provide **legal assistance** to refugees on topics such as residency, legal status, tenancy, family law, birth registration, child rights issues and SGBV, amongst other topics. By the end

of the third quarter, more than of 38,900 refugees had received legal assistance through different activities ranging from counselling to legal representation.

In its continuous efforts to enable children to enjoy their right to an identity and prevent **statelessness**, more than 6,300 parents were counselled on how to register the birth of newborn babies with the Lebanese civil authorities during the third quarter, bringing the total number reached so far in 2017 to over 19,000. Counselling sessions in this regard are regularly held with refugees approaching UNHCR to add newborns to their files. To complement this, counselling and referral mechanisms are also in place through Outreach Volunteers from within refugee communities and other front-liners, including protection monitoring teams and health personnel.

Following continuous advocacy by UNHCR, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) issued a memorandum/circular on 12 September reducing the documentation requirements for Syrian nationals when registering the birth of their children with the Personal Status Department (PSD). In other words, Syrian parents with children born in Lebanon now no longer need to have legal residency to register the birth of their children with the Foreigners' Registry. This circular will help thousands of families to register the birth of their children in the months ahead.

UNHCR and partners monitor the situation of refugees in **detention** in order to address their needs and prevent forcible deportation to countries where they may face harm. By the end of the third quarter, some 3,860 persons of concern of various nationalities in detention had been assisted. Material support included blankets, hygiene kits, food and clothes. UNHCR continued to advocate for continuous access to persons under its mandate, and for all involved institutions to uphold relevant law to protect persons of concern from arbitrary detention. UNHCR continues to identify and refer non-Syrian refugees in detention, who are at risk of *refoulement* unless resettlement to a third country can be secured, for fast-track status determination and resettlement assessment as a key protection tool to secure their protection and a durable solution.

UNHCR continues to monitor cross-border movements between Lebanon and Syria. Staff observe the admission of new arrivals at the main border crossing points and refers cases identified as meeting the humanitarian exception criteria to the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), while advocating for the expansion of the humanitarian admission criteria, to prevent *refoulement* and to promote protection-sensitive border management.

Ensuring dignity in exile

Because protection starts within the community, UNHCR helps refugees in Lebanon strengthen their own resilience and protective mechanisms through a variety of **community-based interventions**, which aim to identify, prevent, and respond to protection issues.

Throughout the past years, UNHCR has built and trained a network of more than 600 **Outreach Volunteers (OVs)** from within refugee and host communities. Among them, around half are now specialized and trained

in areas such as education, child protection, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), health, and paralegal matters. OVs share information with communities on available services, help mobilize communities to, for example, enrol children in school, collect information, and constantly dialogue with UNHCR on issues of concern within the communities. OVs also support the identification of persons at heightened risk and their referral to relevant services and assistance providers. Since the beginning of 2017, OVs have referred close to 18,500 persons at heightened risk to relevant services and partners.

By the end of the third quarter, UNHCR had supported a wide range of activities, services and information sessions in a total of 33 **Social Development Centres** run by MoSA and **Community Development Centres** run by NGOs, benefitting close to 100,000 people. The centres serve as a one-stop shop and a safe space where refugees and Lebanese can access services and activities such as language, literacy and IT classes and training sessions on upcycling, textile and artisan handicraft. The centres also provide psychosocial support activities and information sessions on birth and marriage registration, available services in Lebanon, prevention of fraud and exploitation, SGBV prevention and child rights.

Individuals identified as being at risk are supported through case management and referred to specialized services. SGBV survivors receive specialized services in an integrated response, comprising emotional and psychological support, health care, legal assistance, safe accommodation, and material assistance. Safe spaces are a core component of UNHCR's protection programme, allowing people at risk to seek safety, protection and assistance. During the third quarter of 2017, more than 6,100 women and men at risk of SGBV accessed safe spaces, bringing the total so far in 2017 to around 17,800 individuals.

UNHCR continues to use Best Interest Determination (BID) procedures as a key intervention to ensure the well-being and protection of children at medium and high risk. By the end of the third quarter, the total number of children assisted through specialized services as part of the case management process in 2017 exceeded 1,900.

Capacity-building interventions also targeted child protection and SGBV case workers and addressed pertinent issues such as unaccompanied and separated children, children exposed to early marriage, child labour, children with disabilities, and sensitive engagement with SGBV survivors. With the aim of enhancing the role of communities in supporting children, UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) implemented a national training project to strengthen the capacity of OVs to respond to low-risk cases of unaccompanied and separated children and their caregivers. As a result, 102 caseworkers and OVs were trained during the third quarter of 2017. In addition, 155 SGBV caseworkers throughout the country were trained, also in partnership with IRC, on handling cases of intimate-partner violence, supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, male and incest survivors, and self-care of caseworkers. To enhance the capacity of national actors, UNHCR, in partnership with the Lebanese NGO KAFA, provided 84 GSO officials with training on the prevention and response to human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

As an integral part of its comprehensive protection response aimed at preserving a dignified protection space for refugees while in exile in Lebanon, and efforts to support the development of the social protection system

in Lebanon, UNHCR is providing **multi-purpose cash assistance** to severely vulnerable refugee families. In light of limited resources, UNHCR targets 30,000 Syrian refugee households among the severely vulnerable population for its Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Programme (MCAP).

During the third quarter, 45,000 severely vulnerable Syrian refugee households in Lebanon received MCAP from UNHCR to assist them in meeting their needs in a dignified manner. This included 13,842 households that UNHCR temporarily assisted (beyond its target) following the unexpected closure of the Lebanon Cash Consortium, to allow for a notice period of two months before discontinuation. More than 1,200 severely vulnerable families among the non-Syrian refugee population were also assisted through MCAP during the third quarter

Following the yearly recalibration of the formula, the beneficiary lists for MCAP were updated. As a result, close to 19,500 Syrian refugee families were newly included and they will start receiving UNHCR multi-purpose cash assistance from November, subject to validation results. At the same time, some 16,000 families were identified for discontinuation starting from November onwards. Around 10,000 families remained on the assistance programme lists. All affected families were informed of the changes through SMS, and UNHCR substantially increased the capacity of the call centre to respond to queries from refugees regarding the cash assistance. In parallel, the counselling capacity at UNHCR's reception centres was increased during this period to respond to the increase in the number of refugees approaching UNHCR with questions.

More than 3,004 refugees experiencing serious protection incidents have been supported through UNHCR's **Protection Cash Assistance Programme (PCAP)**, including 2,582 refugees so far in 2017. PCAP aims to assist people with specific protection needs that can be addressed by time-bound cash assistance, as one of the interventions in the case management process. It enables refugees to relocate to safer environments, cover the cost of transportation to access vital services and meet their daily needs while seeking more sustainable solutions. In addition to PCAP, refugees facing urgent protection incidents are assisted by UNHCR and partners through one-off emergency cash assistance to address or mitigate serious harm. In the first three quarters of 2017, more than 4,400 instances of emergency cash assistance have been provided.

By the end of the third quarter of 2017, UNHCR had supported close to 152,000 primary **health care** consultations for Syrian refugees and more than 600 primary health care consultations for non-Syrian refugees country-wide, including antenatal care, non-communicable disease and mental health. UNHCR also supported some 61,600 hospitalizations of Syrian refugees and 300 hospitalizations of non-Syrian refugees for lifesaving and obstetric care. In addition, 50 staff at the Ministry of Public Health were supported in order to enhance the capacity of the national service providers in responding to the increased workload. This included 20 nurses and midwives at primary health care centres.

On **education**, based on figures provided by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), approximately 195,000 refugee children were enrolled in the 2016-17 school year, including in kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools. UNHCR provided more than 1,500 refugee youth with transportation support to enable them to attend MEHE's technical and vocational schools (equivalent to secondary school level).

Through its partnership with MEHE, UNHCR covered the school fees of more than 39,400 refugee children in the first shift of the 2016-17 academic year.

Despite an upwards trend in enrolments, over 40 per cent of refugee children between the age of 6-14 remained out of school in the 2016-17 academic year. UNHCR continued to facilitate homework support groups and parent community groups (PCGs), which encourage the engagement of children and parents in schools, and support the retention of students. In light of the success of the approach and upon the request of MEHE, additional trained refugee volunteers (Education Community Liaisons - ECLs) have been assigned to second-shift schools to identify and refer children at risk of dropping out of school to homework support groups, establish walking groups for those who have no other means of transportation to school, mediate in cases of bullying, pass messages from the school management to the parent community groups and vice versa, and contribute to a more protective environment in schools. During the summer, ECLs also contributed to outreach efforts as the need to reach out-of-school children and counsel caregivers to enrol these children in school remains crucial. By the end of the third quarter, UNHCR and partners has established 425 PCGs, more than 300 homework support groups, and trained over 180 education OVs and 185 ECLs.

At the tertiary level, the 315 students benefiting from UNHCR's DAFI scholarship programme continued to be supported, including through tuition fees, a monthly contribution to living costs, as well as coaching.

Evictions continued during the third quarter of 2017. By the end of September, around 17,500 Syrian refugees in 311 informal settlements and 53 private accommodations had been affected by evictions in the Riyak and Zahle areas, out of whom more than 4,000 have so far relocated. Protection monitoring in eviction and relocation areas has been continuous with a view to assess the needs and plan interventions, track movements, and ensure persons in need are provided with the needed assistance and services (individual protection support, shelter and WASH interventions and a one-time emergency cash grant to relocated families). A worrying trend seen during the reporting period was an increase in arbitrary municipal evictions of Syrian refugees, including in municipalities that are not among the most economically deprived, but where other factors are driving. These followed, or gained momentum after the brutal killing of a Lebanese woman in Mizyara, northern Lebanon, reportedly by a Syrian national, which sparked anger and protests from the local community. The municipality called for the eviction of all Syrians from the municipality, and by the end of September, almost all Syrian refugees had been evicted from Mizyara. These events were soon followed by tensions in other areas in north Lebanon, including in the Zgharta, Dennieh and Bcharre districts. UNHCR has repeatedly raised its strong concern over these collective reprisals against Syrians with the local and central authorities, while assessing and responding to the needs of those affected in coordination with partners.

By the end of the third quarter, close to 103,700 refugees (20,740 households) received **shelter** support, including the distribution of materials (weatherproofing, insulation, fire, and floor rising kits), upgrades of substandard shelter units and improvements of conditions in informal settlements. In preparation for the upcoming winter season, shelter activities were scaled up with a focus on informal settlements. Approximately 87,000 refugees (17,400 households) benefitted from weatherproofing interventions to insulate their shelters and protect them against the elements. By year-end, following a reinforced targeting approach, UNHCR aims

to reach some 65 per cent of refugees in informal settlements. Access to shelter was enhanced for over 6,800 refugees (1,360 households) living in 36 informal settlements in Akkar and Bekaa. In addition, permanent physical improvements were made to substandard shelters to reach adequate standards in exchange for written occupancy agreements from landlords for twelve months. This intervention benefitted more than 9,200 refugees (1,840 households) reducing their economic vulnerability and risk of exploitation while increasing security of tenure.

UNHCR also commenced a new activity aiming at upgrading common spaces in substandard buildings, thus benefitting refugee and host communities living together in these buildings. Upgrade works aim at creating a safer environment and healthier living conditions, and benefitted close to 700 refugees (140 families). Works included repairing broken steps and pipes, installing handrails in staircases, weatherproofing roofs, and insulating electricity cables.

UNHCR's **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)** interventions to improve and maintain sanitation infrastructure have led to improved sanitary conditions (including solid waste) for close to 143,000 individuals in the first nine months of 2017. Access to safe water has been provided to approximately 13,150 refugees, and almost 13,550 refugees have benefited from hygiene promotion activities, aimed at assisting them to adapt their hygiene and sanitation practices to conditions of displacement.

Securing continued hospitality

UNHCR continues to contribute actively to the **task force on tensions** set up earlier this year between UNHCR, UNDP, MoIM and the Ministry of Displaced Affairs (MoSDA) to monitor trends in rising and falling tensions within the local communities, and serve as an early warning mechanism for informing interventions, ideally before tensions escalate. UNHCR also maintained an active role within the Social Stability Working Group, co-chaired with UNDP. A series of activities aimed at reducing social tensions are underway, including social media activities, trainings and cultural events – with several being planned in partnership with the Ministry of Information and MoSDA.

Throughout the third quarter of 2017, UNHCR continued to implement interventions involving both Syrian refugee and host communities to strengthen inter-communal relations and thereby **social stability**. The main objective of these activities is to identify issues of common concern that could be addressed through community participation and service delivery. A new small-scale project towards this end was rolled out towards the end of the third quarter, within which UNHCR, in collaboration with a local partner, is supporting 50 young Lebanese and Syrians with vocational training in the areas of air conditioning maintenance and electrical works. UNHCR also continues to support **Solidarity Initiative** projects, which provide technical and financial support for community-led solutions to collective protection concerns. Solidarity Initiatives have recorded a high participation of host community members (45 per cent).

As part of UNHCR's **Youth Initiative Fund**, a network of youth (aged 14-29) from different nationalities and backgrounds living in the Beirut and Mount Lebanon governorates work to promote peaceful coexistence and strengthen the capacities of the youth to play an active role in their communities.

The added pressure on infrastructure brought about by the influx of Syrian refugees has severely affected **water and sanitation** systems in many parts of Lebanon. UNHCR's WASH strategy aims at assisting both refugees and the communities which host them. The upgrade of water infrastructure continues through the construction of nine water supply systems in the Bekaa and North Lebanon. To date, approximately 148 km of drinking water distribution lines have been installed, including around 6,000 household connections. The construction of three water reservoirs and the drilling and equipment of three (out of four planned) boreholes with pumping stations were also completed during the third quarter. The drilling of the third borehole, construction of two additional water reservoirs, and the rehabilitation of three pumping stations including water chlorination systems are ongoing. Upon completion of these projects, more than 192,000 Lebanese and refugees will gain better and more reliable access to potable water.

Realizing solutions

UNHCR does not currently facilitate or promote refugee returns to Syria as conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified returns are not in place. Nevertheless, small-scale, self-organized returns by individual refugees and families are occurring, and UNHCR expects this trend to continue, unless the security situation in Syria deteriorates. Throughout the third quarter of 2017, UNHCR continued to seek refugees' views and concerns with regards to return, with the objective to inform ongoing cross-sectoral return **preparedness** activities as well as advocacy and mass communication efforts. While organized returns are not expected to take place in the near future, preparing for this needs to start now, for UNHCR and its partners to be ready when the refugees are. UNHCR monitors cross-border movements to the extent possible, with a view to ascertaining the voluntary and informed nature of decisions to return at this stage.

Resettlement remains an important protection tool for the most vulnerable and the only durable solution available at the moment. In 2017, UNHCR is working to submit at least 12,000 refugees for resettlement, while advocating with States to increase resettlement quotas to, at a minimum, match 2016 levels. The available quota for cases with serious medical needs and disabilities remains limited despite large needs. By the end of the third quarter, UNHCR had submitted a total of 11,525 individuals, including 11,148 Syrians, for resettlement consideration and other humanitarian admission programmes to 21 countries.

Working in partnership

The **inter-sector, inter-agency, and sector structures** served as important vehicles for joint planning, needs assessments and dissemination of information, ensuring that partners are kept abreast of key developments and policies. Sector discussions benefited from regular and active participation of the Government, UN agencies, national and international NGOs. UNHCR's concerted efforts ensured that key humanitarian

components, including refugee protection principles, in addition to furthering stabilization goals, such as support to national institutions were reflected in the planning and response.

In order to provide sectors with data to guide programming, UNHCR's **Information Management** Unit maintained the ActivityInfo database and analysed data for sector dashboards that illustrated progress, achievements, and gaps of the respective sectors. The roll-out of an inter-agency referral system in the protection sector established minimum standards for referrals and standardized the manner in which feedback is provided and classified.

UNHCR continued to contribute to key inter-sector initiatives, including updating the **contingency plan** and development of the **monitoring and evaluation framework**. This framework will ensure impact is monitored more thoroughly in the various sectors, as well as ensuring that stabilization indicators are incorporated in each sector. The framework is envisaged to be rolled out prior to the next LCRP planning process.

In light of the developments, an Action Plan for **Arsal** was developed, in line with the strategic objectives in the LCRP, and which aims to form part of a larger effort to tackle the humanitarian and socio-economic situation in Arsal. The Plan, due to be finalized in mid-November, will amongst other things seek to enhance inter-community relations between refugees and the local community in Arsal, which have been strained in the last few months. The preparation of the Plan is coordinated by UNHCR, UNDP, MoSA and the municipality of Arsal.

Summary of interventions



Protection	Reached Jan-Sep	Target if fully funded
Legal assistance and counselling	38,948	37,000
Persons submitted for humanitarian admission and resettlement	11,525	12,575
Persons of concern assisted in detention	3,860	1,800
Children assisted through case management	1,938	5,000
SGBV actors trained	350	500
Specific needs cases referred through volunteers	18,483	51,100
Outreach Volunteers mobilized	626	1,000
Community centres supported	33	50
Individuals participating in community centre activities	99,602	240,000
Individuals receiving emergency and protection cash assistance	6,996	6,200
Refugees counselled on birth registration	19,025	20,500



Education

Children supported for primary education (first and second shift) in 2016/17 school year through co-financing support to MEHE	39,488	50,000
Children supported to attend vocational education in 2016/17 school year	1,563	10,000



Health

Individuals receiving primary health care (including reproductive and mental health)	152,439	300,000
Individuals benefitting from life-saving and obstetric referral health care	61,914	100,000

Basic Assistance

Average number of households assisted with monthly multipurpose cash grants	34,216	55,000
Households receiving seasonal support (winter 2016/2017)	164,673	168,000



Shelter

Individuals benefitting from the provision of weatherproofing and shelter kits	86,966	233,390
Individuals benefitting from an occupancy agreement in rehabilitated buildings	9,231	73,050



Water, sanitation and hygiene

Sanitation infrastructure, maintenance, desludging	143,026	145,500
Hygiene promotion campaigns, hygiene items	13,546	93,237
Access to safe water	13,156	350,000

Institutional and community support

2017 Planned Budget (USD)

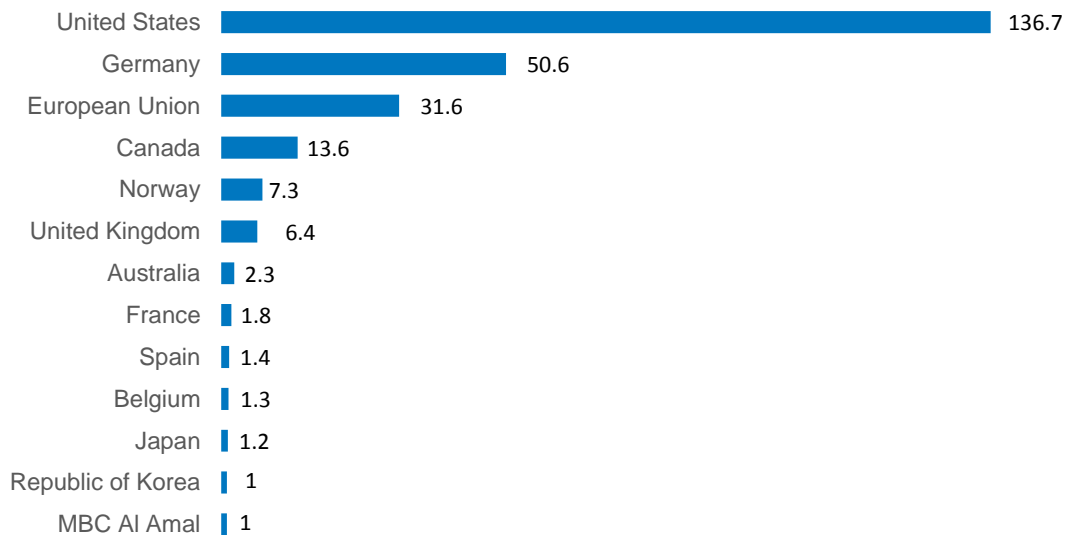
Institutional support (rehabilitation of infrastructure, staffing and training, equipment, supplies, medications and vaccines)	22 million
Community-based projects (health, education, livelihoods, WASH, roads and communities facilities)	14.5 million
Total invested	36.5 million

Financial Information

As of 2 October, total recorded contributions for the UNHCR Lebanon operation amount to some **US\$ 260 million**, including **US\$ 245 million** for the Syria situation and **US\$ 15 million** for the country programme for refugees of other nationalities than Syrians and stateless persons.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to the Lebanon operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

Funding received > US\$ 1 million (in million USD)



Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

United States of America (266 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Priv Donors Spain (54 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | United Kingdom (45 M) | Norway (41 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (26 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Australia (19 M) | Priv Donors Italy (17 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Priv Donors USA (14 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Japan (14 M) | Germany (12 M) | Priv Donors Sweden (11 M) | Italy (10 M)

CONTACTS

Anna King, Senior External Relations Officer, kinga@unhcr.org