

Lebanon

July – September 2018

This report provides an update on key developments and UNHCR activities during the third quarter of 2018 in narrative and numbers (please see also an indicator report at the end of the document).

Legal residency remains one of UNHCR's top advocacy and capacity development priorities. According to the findings of the 2018 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR), due to be published in the fourth quarter, the percentage of Syrian individuals with **legal residency** remained low at 27% (compared to 26% in 2017) and the percentage of households with all members (>15 years old) having legal residency also remained steady (at 18%, compared to 19% in 2017). UNHCR estimates that out of the VaSyR sample, 35% were eligible to benefit from the General Security's residency fee waiver from March 2017; of this sample, 44% of the respondents had legal residency.

To promote the implementation of recent measures adopted by the Government of Lebanon to facilitate **birth and marriage registration** of Syrian refugees, UNHCR is supporting the Directorate General of Personal Status, within the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, through additional staffing and equipment to increase the capacity of its offices to register civil events.

Throughout the third quarter, UNHCR **border monitoring** teams conducted assessments with more than 2,800 Syrians departing and arriving to Lebanon from Syria, mainly at three official land border crossings (Abboudiyeh and Areeda in North Lebanon, and Masnaa in the Bekaa). In terms of trends, UNHCR observed an increase in the number of individual spontaneous returns to Syria, e.g. due to the recent GSO exit procedures that allow certain categories of Syrians to regularize their stay and finalize their exit formalities at the borders without having to pay a fee (see Policy Updates).

POLICY UPDATES

At the end of July 2018, the Directorate General of General Security (GSO) issued a memo regulating exit formalities of Syrians who have overstayed their residency permits. According to the memo, exit procedures can be finalized at the GSO border centres. However, the criteria differ based on the type of residency the refugee has: refugees who previously renewed their residency based on a UNHCR certificate, and then overstayed, can exit the country without paying any fees and without being issued a re-entry ban; this exemption is currently not extended to other residency categories. UNHCR continues to advocate for an expansion of the waiver of overstay fees with no re-entry ban to all Syrian refugees.

In August 2018, the GSO issued another memo informing that 17 of its existing centres around the country will, in addition to issuing legal residency, receive requests from refugees wishing to return to Syria, individually or in groups. GSO will assist refugees registering their interest to return with exit formalities, and seek clearance for their return with the Syrian authorities. Refugees who have expired legal residency and who register for return at these centres will have their overstay fees waived without being issued a re-entry ban.

UNHCR with partners prepared for the **2018-19 school year** through advocacy for the inclusion of refugee children in second shift public schools, and through the mobilization of Outreach Volunteers specialized in education to identify out of school children and inform them about education opportunities and related support. UNHCR and UNICEF produced a mapping of the cadastres that have the highest concentration of refugee children who are out of school, to inform a future identification and profiling exercise. On tertiary education, UNHCR and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education organized a roundtable on ways to increase and improve access to quality connected learning programs for refugee and Lebanese students, by increasing the capacity of Lebanese universities to design, implement, accredit and monitor connected learning programs. The needs and capacities of university and government actors were mapped, and a plan developed for follow-up actions.

UNHCR and WFP informed Syrian refugees about the changes in the beneficiaries of the **cash and food assistance** programmes that were due to be implemented in the third quarter, following the annual recalibration of the desk formula and vulnerability ranking. Information about the changes was published on the refugee website and SMSs were sent to the families who would be discontinued from assistance, and to those who would be included in the assistance programmes as of 1 November. Prior to this, frontline staff and refugee Outreach Volunteers had been trained and equipped to explain to refugees the rationale behind the changes; also, the capacity of the call centre was increased to receive a higher number of queries.

The findings from UNHCR's **outcome monitoring** in July-August of the multi-purpose cash assistance programme confirmed that families receiving MPCA use it to cover their most basic needs, with expenditures on rent being the highest expense reported, followed by food and health. The results also show that cash assistance is a vital source of income for the beneficiary families, with over 90% stating it as their primary and/or secondary income source, replacing debt. These findings have remained consistent throughout UNHCR's monitoring, which takes place every four months, and i.a. analyses differences in expenditures and coping strategies between refugees who receive MPCA and families who do not receive the monthly cash assistance.

UNHCR introduced revised **referral health care** guidelines at the beginning of the third quarter, as a measure to reach as many refugees in need of medical care as possible within the funds available. The main risk with the

In June - September:

28,600 families received individualized legal counselling on how to register the birth of their child; **4,000** vulnerable families directly supported register the birth of their child

7,200 families counselled on marriage registration; **460** families who married unofficially were directly supported to obtain retroactive proof of their marriage

11,694 women, men, girls and boys accessed safe spaces (8,720 women, 4,443 men, including 7,261 under 18 years)

1,331 (714 women, 554 men and 63 children) individuals supported with protection cash assistance

1,157 individuals with specific needs assisted with non-cash services

77,200 refugees and Lebanese reached through 24 community centres across Lebanon (Jan-Sep 2018)

47,700 refugees reached by Outreach Volunteers on topics including available services, early marriage prevention, and marriage and birth registration

1,100 border monitoring assessments conducted

294 visits to detention facilities conducted; **3,900** detainees helped with legal assistance, psychosocial support, medical care, and material assistance, including core relief items

20 community-led projects implemented

215,928 refugees (33,575 families) on average assisted with the multi-purpose cash each month

19,990 hospital admissions supported

changes is that they will result in reduced access to hospital care due to increased costs for some admissions, including deliveries, which in turn could lead to higher morbidity and mortality rates. UNHCR is closely monitoring this and other risks, and will assess the impact of the changes six months after their implementation. Through its real-time access to the database of hospital admissions, UNHCR is able to rapidly detect any significant limitations in access. Refugee Outreach Volunteers in the community and partners are also monitoring the impact of these changes, and advising UNHCR on potential problems with access or other consequences of the changes. Also to mitigate risks, UNHCR is able to provide compelling cases with emergency cash assistance, to enable them to access essential health care.

During the third quarter, UNHCR completed a four-year project to upgrade four **water supply systems** in the Bekaa (Qab Elias and Riyak) and in the North (Halba and Assoun), improving the supply of safe water for 103,478 people. These infrastructure works have moreover contributed to the livelihoods of many workers, Lebanese contractors and consultants living in these municipalities. The project also encompassed awareness-raising campaigns on water conservation and cost recovery in the targeted communities, and helped to promote good governance and service sustainability, and a dialogue between communities and the building of trust between consumers and the water establishment (public service provider). The project has improved the water establishments' revenue and led to around 1,000 additional subscriptions to water supply networks.

UNHCR continues to advocate for, and sensitize government, civil society, media and other stakeholders to the importance of respecting the international standards and principles pertaining to **voluntary repatriation**, and has developed guidance and coordination mechanisms among key stakeholders to ensure common standards and approaches with regard to refugee returns. Training on voluntary repatriation is progressively being rolled out to UNHCR and partner staff, frontliners such as refugee Outreach Volunteers, government officials and local authorities.

During the third quarter, UNHCR verified the departure of 1,083 individuals who **returned spontaneously** on their own from Lebanon to Syria. In addition, around 3,300 individuals departed within 24 self-organized or General Security-facilitated group returns during the third quarter. From January to September 2018, 3,429 individuals have returned on their own to Syria, while around 4,000 individuals have returned in group movements during the same period, bringing the total number of returns as of end-September to around 7,450. UNHCR is not facilitating/organizing these returns but liaises closely with the General Security in connection with the group movements, to promote that the returns take place in safety and dignity. Also, in order to be of help to refugees opting to return now, UNHCR conducts pre-return interviews to assess the refugees' intentions and motivations, and to identify any civil or ID document and/or other protection or compelling needs they may have. UNHCR staff has also been present at every staging and departure point to attend to queries or specific needs of the refugees, and to address immediate protection concerns such as separation of families or last minute withdrawals.

UNHCR finalised the analysis of its **return intentions** survey carried out in April. The survey results show that the majority of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon (88%) wish to return to Syria once conditions for sustainable returns in safety are in place. However, amongst those who aspire to go home, only a few see return as a short term possibility; 85% of the respondents stated they do not plan to return to Syria in the next 12 months, 12% were undecided, and only 3% intended to return in the next 12 months. These results are similar to the findings of the intentions survey conducted in 2017.

PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS

January - September 2018

Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers

Protection	Reached Jan-Sep	2018 Target (prioritized)*	2018 Target (if fully funded)
Legal assistance and counselling provided	32,215	27,530	40,720
Persons submitted for resettlement and humanitarian admission	6,293	9,500	9,500
Monitoring visits to detention centres conducted	842	1,292	1,925
Persons assisted through SGBV psychosocial support	1,332	1,940	4,270
Community groups supported	788	606	855
Individuals/cases receiving protection or emergency cash assistance	3,875	3,845	12,700
Children registered and issued documentation under regular birth registration procedure	5,217	6,500	14,000
Basic Assistance			
Average number of households assisted with monthly multi-purpose cash grants	32,411	33,435	78,869
Households receiving seasonal support (winter 2017-18)	156,725	178,000	178,000
Health			
Individuals benefitting from referral health care	58,068	65,000	100,000
Shelter and WASH			
Shelter maintenance tool kits and materials provided	15,918	23,998	50,250
Households benefitting from shelter upgrades in exchange for an occupancy agreement	380	2,030	8,120
Individuals with access to improved sanitation	12,448	12,600	56,100
Individuals assisted with improved access to adequate quantity of safe water for drinking and for domestic use	107,823	214,200	374,000
Institutional and community support		2018 Planned Budget (USD)	
Institutional support (rehabilitation of infrastructure, staffing and training, equipment, supplies, medications and vaccines)		23 million	
Community-based projects (health, education, livelihoods, WASH, roads and community facilities)		4.8 million	
Total invested		27.8 million	

Refugees and asylum-seekers (other nationalities)

Protection	Reached Jan-Sep	2018 Target (prioritized)*	2018 Target (if fully funded)
Legal assistance provided	1,390	2,630	2,800
Monitoring visits to detention centres conducted	905	835	1,200
Persons submitted for resettlement and humanitarian admission	134	330	330
Persons departed through resettlement	378	400	400
Individuals/cases receiving protection cash assistance	159	475	700
Children registered and issued documentation under regular birth registration procedure	28	250	300
Persons assisted through SGBV psychosocial support	62	100	200
Basic Assistance			
Average number of households assisted with monthly multi-purpose cash grants	1,466	1,773	2,800
Health			
Individuals benefitting from life-saving emergency and obstetric referral health care	365	550	1,000

Stateless

Protection	Reached Jan-Sep	2018 Target (prioritized)*	2018 Target (if fully funded)
Legal assistance provided	145	200	250

* As of September 2018. Priorities and targets are subject to change throughout the year to respond to unforeseen needs, funds available, and other factors.

UNHCR Lebanon is grateful for the support of its donors, including major donors of unearmarked and regional funds, as well as private donors



Donors as of October 2018