

# Lebanon

December 2019

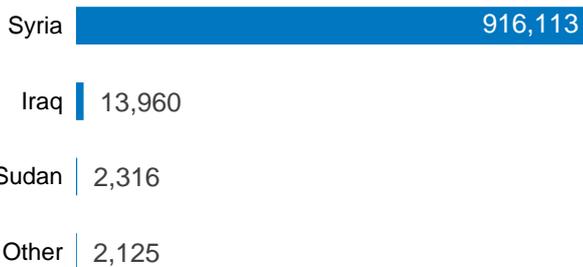
More than **eight years** into the Syria crisis, Lebanon remains the country hosting the **largest number of refugees** per capita. More than **915,000** Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR, though

the Government estimate of the total remains at **1.5 million**. In addition, more than **18,000** refugees of Iraqi, Sudanese and other origins stay in Lebanon. The presence of such a large refugee population in a country

facing an **economic crisis, high unemployment, pressure on infrastructure, and environmental challenges** is increasingly trying the patience and hospitality of the community.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Country of origin



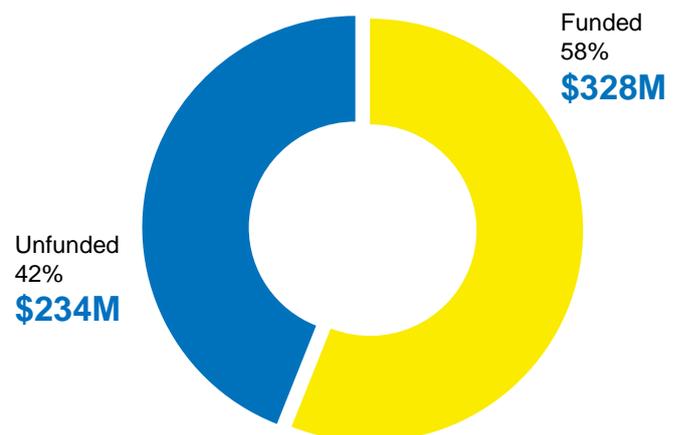
\* Registration figures as of 30 November 2019

\*\* UNHCR registration of Syrian refugees in Lebanon has been suspended since May 2015 through a decision by the Government of Lebanon

## FUNDING

### USD 562 M

requested for the Lebanon operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

485 National Staff

99 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Branch Office in Beirut

2 Sub-offices in Tripoli and Zahle

2 Field Offices in Mount Lebanon and Tyre



## Working in Partnership

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) is led by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) on behalf of the Government of Lebanon and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. UNHCR co-leads the humanitarian refugee response component of the LCRP, while UNDP co-leads the resilience component, both agencies working in close collaboration with the Government of Lebanon and humanitarian and development actors in doing so. UNHCR also co-leads a number of thematic sectors, namely Protection, Basic Assistance, Health, and Shelter, and provides support to other sectors, including Education, Social Stability and WASH.

## Main Activities

### Protection

**Advocacy** aimed at preserving the protection and dignity of refugees while they remain in temporary exile in Lebanon is at the core of UNHCR's work. In an increasingly restrictive protection environment, where multiple measures are being taken to restrict (re-)entry of Syrians to the territory, the use of hard structures in shelters to protect against the elements, and access to livelihoods, advocacy grounded in international standards and the rule of law remains a central component of UNHCR's protection and solutions work.

UNHCR **regularly verifies and updates the data** of Syrian refugees who registered with UNHCR before the Government's instruction in 2015 to suspend registration, and registers and determines the claims of asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Accurate data is needed to inform planning and interventions, including eligibility for assistance, responses to refugees with specific needs, and the identification of durable solutions. In 2019, UNHCR aims to fully verify 69% of registered Syrian refugees, while updating key changes in, for example, family composition, specific needs and contact numbers of additional case files, and regularly update the data of refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities.

Access to territory has remained restricted for Syrians since 2015, and become increasingly difficult since the Higher Defence Council and the Directorate General of General Security (GSO) adopted new decisions in this regard in April 2019. UNHCR **conducts border monitoring and advocates for a full and inclusive application of the narrow humanitarian admission criteria**. UNHCR also **intervenes to prevent *refoulement***, and makes regular visits to prisons and places of detention to identify and assist persons of concern.

UNHCR advocates for policies and procedures that **enable all refugees access to temporary legal residency**, including through a full and even application of existing circulars targeting Syrians, and for the expansion of the residency fee waiver (issued in March 2017) to cover all categories of refugees. UNHCR supports the GSO to increase its capacity to process residency renewal requests from registered Syrian refugees, as well as to provide services to Lebanese citizens.

UNHCR **provides legal aid, including counselling and representation**, and implements awareness sessions and campaigns to raise refugees' knowledge on how to obtain legal residency, civil documents to certify births, marriages, divorces and deaths that have taken place in Lebanon, and access procedures relating to family issues, domestic violence, and civil or administrative disputes. UNHCR aims to assist up to 42,800 refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons with legal aid in 2019.

**Individuals and families with specific needs also receive tailored support** to obtain marriage registration, which will facilitate birth registration of their children and increase the protection of women in

case of later separation, divorce or loss of their husband. To this end, UNHCR is providing equipment and staffing to increase the capacity of the Personal Status Department (PSD) within the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities.

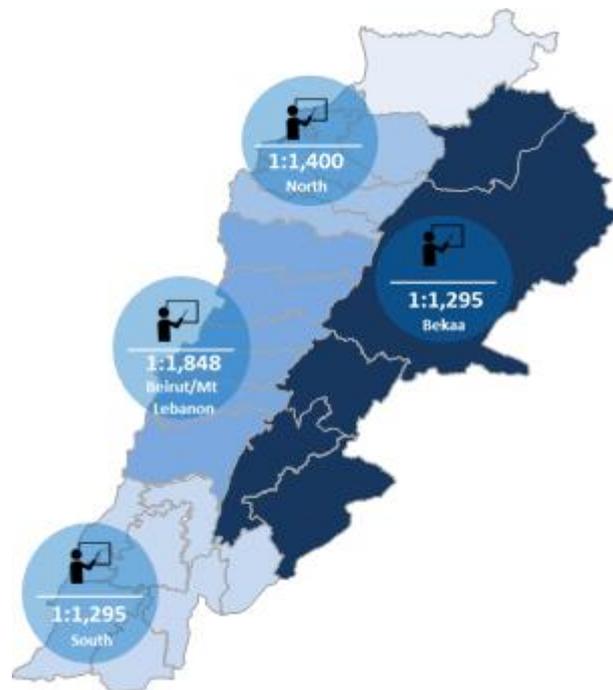
Local and institutional capacities are supported to prevent and address SGBV and child protection related issues through community mobilization, counselling, outreach, strengthening of specialized services and promoting the engagement of men and boys in SGBV prevention and response.

79 community centres run by either the national authorities or NGOs are supported by UNHCR. These centres support refugees and Lebanese in receiving updated information about services, acquire skills through trainings, and receive psychosocial support, among others.

### Engaging & Empowering Refugees

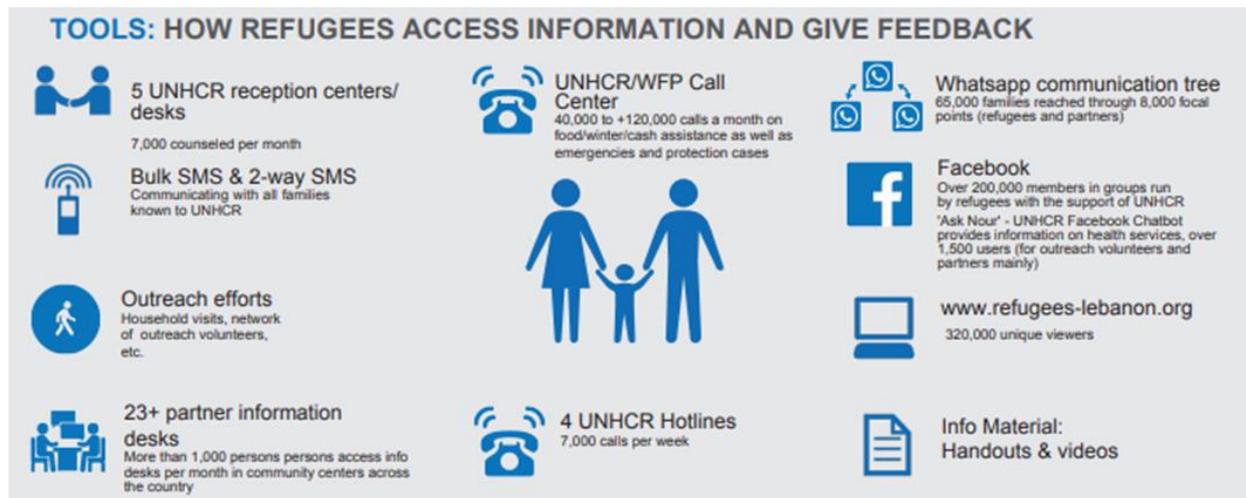
Whether through daily outreach activities, targeted focus group discussions or surveys, UNHCR seeks regular feedback from refugees on their concerns, needs and capacities, and their views on current and foreseen interventions to ensure that they respond to refugees' expectations and are effective.

Each year, UNHCR and key partners consult with more than 2,000 refugee women, men, girls and boys of Syrian and other origins, with diverse profiles, through a Participatory Assessment exercise. The findings inform UNHCR's assessment and analyses of the protection situation, design of the country operations plan and prioritisation of activities and implementation of its programmes. In addition, UNHCR and partners conduct around 200 community and individual meetings each month.



### UNHCR's Outreach Volunteer Initiative

153 community groups have been mobilised around the country, many of which are linked to community centres. The groups include youth, women, older persons and LGBTI groups with both refugee and Lebanese members, with 67% participation of women and girls. UNHCR engages with more than 660 general and specialized outreach volunteers (OVs), including 60% females, and 17% youth, from the refugee and host communities. OVs provide practical information to refugees, raise awareness on relevant topics, visit the most vulnerable, and refer those with specific needs to UNHCR and other response partners for help. Community Reference Groups (CRGs) have been set up across Lebanon to advise on the design of activities and programs. Currently, there are five CRGs active with 47 members of whom 53% are women, 19% are youth, 9% are older persons and 4% have disabilities.



## Durable solutions

Local integration in Lebanon is not an option provided by the Government, so UNHCR works towards securing durable solutions outside the country. In 2019, UNHCR aims to submit up to 11,500 refugees for third country resettlement, and continues to advocate with countries for increased quotas.

While UNHCR is currently not organising voluntary repatriation of refugees to Syria, support is provided to refugees who wish to return, through the provision of information the importance of having identity and civil status documents in order prior to return, and the availability of community centres and services in Syria. In coordination with relevant actors, refugee children returning are also provided with school diplomas and vaccinations. UNHCR is also present at every staging and departure point across the country during GSO-facilitated group return movements; during 2018, UNHCR was present during a total of 83 movements. Since 2017, UNHCR has conducted regular surveys to gauge refugees' intentions and perceptions in relation to return, in order to inform advocacy and other interventions aimed at creating enabling conditions for safe, dignified and sustainable return. On average 86% of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon express a longing to repatriate to their home country

## Multi-purpose cash assistance

UNHCR Lebanon has pioneered the provision of humanitarian assistance through cash and ATM cards, and implemented a multi-purpose cash assistance programme since 2013. Apart from strengthening the capacity of the benefitting families to cover their own basic needs, such as rent, food and medicines, and reduce their vulnerability to exploitation and harmful coping strategies, UNHCR's multi-purpose cash programme has enabled refugees to contribute to the local economy by purchasing directly from local markets and shops. In 2018, UNHCR provided unrestricted cash assistance (USD 175 per month) to some 34,600 Syrian and non-Syrian refugee families, amounting to USD 70 million in cash transfer value. 84,000 severely vulnerable Syrian refugee families and 2,100 refugee families of other nationalities are assessed to be in need of UNHCR multi-purpose cash assistance in 2019, of whom UNHCR will prioritise to assist the same number of families as in 2018.

For the 2019-2020 winter season, UNHCR is providing winter support through cash assistance to close to 870,000 refugees to help them meet additional needs and costs due to the harsh winter weather. UNHCR's winter programme also includes core relief items and shelter improvement kits. In light of the major economic crisis currently affecting Lebanon, UNHCR's winter assistance will also reach more vulnerable Lebanese families than in previous years.

## Education

Given the importance of accurate data for planning and the design of effective programs, maintaining updated information on trends and individual data on the education acquired by the refugee children in Lebanon, including those children out-of-school, is a core activity. Specifically, this data helps inform advocacy and interventions to bring children into formal or informal learning opportunities, and supports the design of programmes to support the retention of those in schools.

At community level, work is ongoing to identify out-of-school children and youth, and provide counselling and awareness sessions and community-based solutions for those at risk of dropping out. Around 300 homework support groups, led by community volunteers, have been established. Parental engagement in their children's learning is being fostered through more than 300 parent community groups, and more than 380 Education Community Liaison volunteers, who serve as a link between parents and the school administration and teachers in 262 public schools. To increase the capacity of public schools to accommodate the large number of Lebanese and refugee students, and mitigate the impact of such a large refugee population on the public infrastructure, UNHCR is rehabilitating and expanding the size of 16 schools around the country. The works include measures to enhance the physical accessibility of children with disabilities.

Some 1,700 university students are receiving full scholarships to study in Lebanese universities, as well as language support and a monthly allowance to help them with transportation and other expenses; 350 of them are part of the UNHCR/DAFI scholarship program, and are engaged in different volunteer activities within the community. UNHCR also facilitates scholarship programmes allowing refugee students to travel to third countries to pursue or resume their higher education in 2018, more than 60 students undertook such travel, and a similar number is expected for 2019.

## Health

While refugees have non-discriminatory access to public and private health facilities in Lebanon, the Lebanese health system is mostly privatized and user fees present a significant barrier. UNHCR supports refugees' access to comprehensive primary health care services, including child and maternal health, sexual and reproductive health, care for non-communicable diseases and mental health services, through subsidizing health services and medication, including vaccinations, at primary health care centres, hospitals and mobile health services.

While UNHCR is one of many actors supporting primary health care centres, the organization remains almost the sole supporter of hospital care for refugees apart from *ad hoc* services by other actors. To improve access, equity and affordability of health care services for persons of concern, UNHCR partially covers (67% on average) the cost of life-saving and emergency interventions. In 2019, the target is to support around 73,000 hospitalizations.

## Shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

An integrated, area-based approach is taken to responding to refugees' acute shelter needs in informal settlements and through sustainable rehabilitation of substandard buildings. Poor urban neighbourhoods and rural areas in need of support are identified and receive targeted assistance through an integrated shelter/WASH response. In 2019, around 2,700 households will be prioritized for shelter rehabilitation and access to water and sanitation and up to 58,000 refugees and host community members will benefit from storm water drainage infrastructure in flood prone areas, onsite septic tanks or connections to sewage conveyors, and desludging.

Technical assessments are conducted to identify substandard shelters for rehabilitation and ensure their upgrade to adequate standards in exchange for written 12 months occupancy agreements with landlords. Residents of informal settlements who were affected by floods or fires are provided with shelter kits and assistance to rebuild their shelters. These refugees also benefit from desludging services to prevent public health risks; access to safe water through quality-monitored water trucking or through connection to water sources; and sensitization on hygiene practices adapted to the displacement conditions.

### **Support to Lebanese host communities and national and local responders**

As part of UNHCR's efforts to preserve the hospitality and social stability of host communities, support is provided to central and local authorities to increase their capacity to respond to the needs of refugees and Lebanese communities affected by the presence of refugees. This support includes equipment, training, supplies, and operational staffing costs.

A number of projects to promote peaceful coexistence amongst Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities, as well as sectoral interventions targeting host communities (e.g. public infrastructure) are implemented and supported by UNHCR. This includes the provision of items and infrastructure (e.g. garbage trucks for solid waste management, upgrading water systems, construction of water reservoirs and distribution systems, garbage sorting and recycling), which benefit Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities alike. In 2019, UNHCR aims to support nine municipalities, benefiting 102,000 refugees and host community members, to establish sorting at source and/or composting facilities.

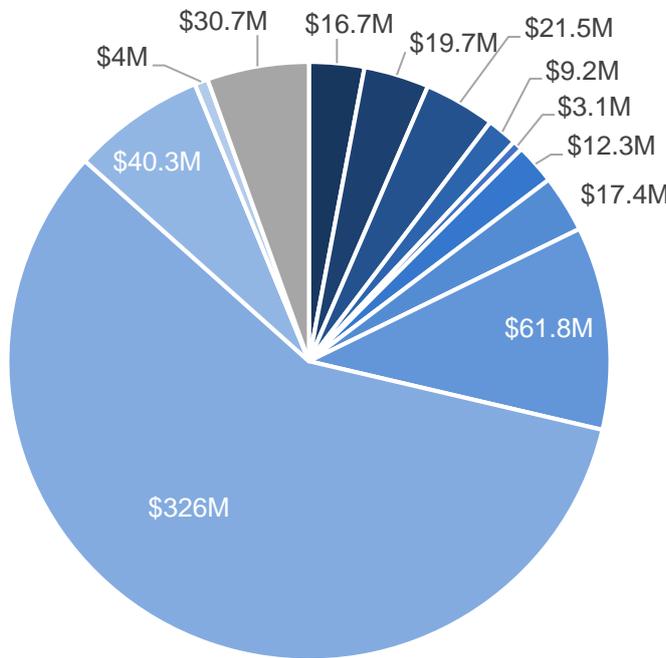
Within the social stability sector, UNHCR works closely with UNDP and other partners in development and resilience, and supports community-based activities such as youth groups.

### **Preventing and eradicating statelessness**

In line with UNHCR's Global Campaign to bring an end to statelessness by 2024, UNHCR Lebanon's multi-year strategy aims to better identify stateless populations and those at risk of statelessness, and to prevent and reduce statelessness in Lebanon. Specifically, in 2019, UNHCR will support access to documentation and legal remedies for stateless persons and advocacy for legal reform, including the removal of gender-discriminatory nationality provisions, and the inclusion of stateless persons into national and humanitarian assistance programs and plans.

UNHCR will also provide technical support to the Working Group on Statelessness, and continue working closely with UNICEF, in the context of the joint Global Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality, to promote joint advocacy initiatives to prevent and reduce childhood statelessness.

## 2019 financial requirements



- Security from violence and exploitation
- Community empowerment and self-reliance
- Favourable protection environment
- Fair protection processes and documentation
- Durable solutions
- Services for persons with specific needs
- Education
- Health
- Basic needs
- Shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene
- Leadership, coordination and partnerships
- Logistics and operations support

### Thank you to UNHCR Lebanon's donors in 2018 and 2019



### Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked and other softly earmarked funds in 2019

Denmark | Finland | France | Germany | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Private donors

### LINKS

UNHCR Lebanon website ([www.unhcr.org/lb](http://www.unhcr.org/lb)) | UNHCR Lebanon Facebook ([www.facebook.com/UNHCRLebanon](http://www.facebook.com/UNHCRLebanon)) | UNHCR Lebanon Twitter ([twitter.com/UNHCRLebanon](https://twitter.com/UNHCRLebanon))