

Shelter Programme - Lebanon

December 2023

Lebanon remains the country hosting the **largest number of refugees per capita**, with the Government's estimation of **1.5 m Syrian refugees** and 11,238 refugees of other nationalities.

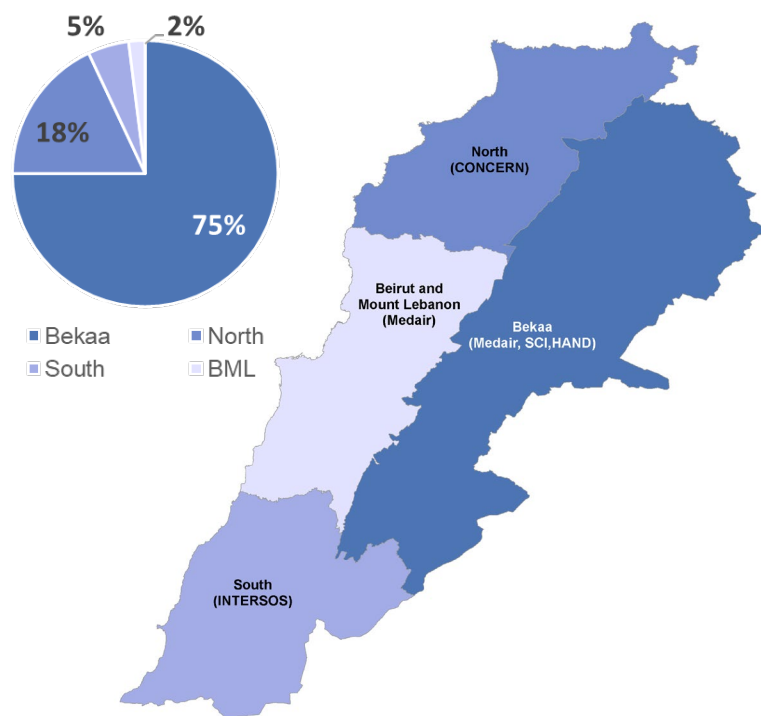
The socio-economic downturn coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut blast and lately the Gaza situation, have all contributed to **nine out of ten Syrian refugees** being in need of humanitarian assistance to cover their basic needs.

Refugee households live in different shelter categories¹, and **more than half** live in dangerous, substandard, or overcrowded shelters.

Shelter Achievements – 2023

210,273 refugees and vulnerable Lebanese were supported in 2023 across all 8 governorates of Lebanon through six intervention types. Core activities aimed to stabilize dignified living conditions for the forcibly displaced. Additionally, UNHCR maintained response capacities for natural hazards like floods or fires and mitigate evictions. Contingency stocks bolstered response capacities for sudden influxes, ensuring effective support for vulnerable populations in times of crisis.

5,653 Ind.	have their Shelters Rehabilitated
9,455 Ind.	received Cash for Rent
189,209 Ind.	have their shelters Weatherproofed
16,438 Ind	have their Site Improved
69,145 Ind.	received Fire extinguishers
3,414 Ind.	have their Common Areas upgraded



¹ According to the preliminary findings of the 2023 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR), 71% live in residential shelters, 20% in non-permanent shelters, and 9% in non-residential shelters with 7.1% under an eviction notice.

Main Activities

The UNHCR shelter response aims to protect vulnerable populations and contribute to social stability by improving access to physically adequate shelter while ensuring the security of tenure. Focus is given to lifesaving interventions addressing the shelter needs in informal settlements in addition to disadvantaged urban/peri-urban areas.

In Informal Tented Settlements (ITS)

1. Weatherproofing/ Emergency Response

UNHCR aims to respond to adverse weather conditions and emergencies including floods, extreme winds, snow accumulation, and water leakage. 33,000 families residing in ITS received shelter kits to reinforce or rebuild their shelters as part of emergency preparedness and winterization response.

2. Site Improvement

Site improvement is intended to improve living conditions and reduce health and safety risks in ITS. Flood risk reduction, decongestion of the settlement density, and leveling/improving access and drainage wherever feasible, concerned 131 sites identified as the most critical ones, allowing 2,779 families to benefit of improved living conditions.

3. Fire Mitigation Services

Fire risk in ITS and Collective Shelter (CS) remains a constant life threat. Based on gap analysis, UNHCR distributed/refilled 4,772 fire extinguishers benefitting 12,983 families. In addition, around 4,570 prevention awareness sessions were conducted. Furthermore, 250 specially designed fire barriers were implemented in 6 congested ITS where minimum safety distance is impossible to be achieved.

In Urban /peri-urban Areas

4. Rehabilitation of substandard shelters

Rehabilitation activities aim to improve living conditions, dignity, protection, and security of the most vulnerable refugees residing in or moving to residential/non-residential substandard shelters. 1,619 families had their shelters upgraded to adequate standards and benefitted from secure tenure through written lease agreements and occupancy free of charge for one year.

5. Cash for Rent (CfR) Assistance

CfR assistance is a provision of periodic conditional cash grants to support vulnerable families at imminent risk of eviction. 1,715 families benefitted from CfR support coupled with enhanced tenure security in shelters with adequate standards, offsetting the risk of eviction and secondary displacement and allowing the targeted families to adjust to deteriorating economic situations.

6. Upgrades of Common Areas

UNHCR supported the upgrade of 33 common areas in severely vulnerable buildings, improving safety, security, and accessibility for 692 families including people with specific needs, through rehabilitating common bathrooms, staircases, entrance doors, and roofs. Further, improvement concerning the building's vicinity also contributes to diffusing social tensions with the host community.

SUPPORT TO OTHER UNHCR SECTORS

The shelter unit's role extends to providing technical support to various UNHCR sectors. In 2023, it assisted the protection sector in rehabilitating the Aarida General Security border premises in North Lebanon. Additionally, the shelter team actively contributed to the technical realization of the Community Support Projects (CSPs), aimed at enhancing socio-economic stability and alleviating tensions between refugees and host communities. In 2023, over 30 CSPs were implemented, including the installation of solar renewable energy for water stations, primary healthcare facilities, and solar streetlights. Support also involved expanding solid waste landfills to address critical infrastructure needs in affected areas.

Transition in Strategy through Innovation

UNHCR is committed to enhance its shelter interventions through creative and sustainable solutions, aligning with its overarching strategy to optimize resources and improve the overall effectiveness of assistance. In 2023, the UNHCR embarked on a pivotal shelter strategy transition set over the next two years, to address the persistent challenge of informal settlements and identify innovative solutions. First, a systematic approach involved the coding of individual tents for multiyear tracking of weatherproofing assistance and optimizing resource was developed. Second, the implementation of preassembled high-rigidity kits, inspired by Medium Repairs Kits, to reinforce shelter structures and reduce the need for frequent interventions was introduced. Lastly, UNHCR has set-up a biomass fuel production in Beqaa Valley, that aims to gradually produce up to 2000 tons per year for retail but also as an aid to sustain more than 10,000 refugees' needs during winter. This innovative forward-thinking approach not only addresses environmental sustainability concerns but also responds to the evolving needs of displaced populations, particularly in informal settlements vulnerable to winter conditions.

Coding tents in ITS:



In an ongoing collaboration with Medair in Bekaa, the coding pilot initiative is mapping all tents across different ITSs. This allows to enhance the targeting and delivery of assistance, streamline distributions, and benefit from synergies between activities through better planning of the site improvements and services. In 2023, more than 26,000 tents across 1,650 informal settlements were coded. Associated sites, tents and activities are now linked and recorded in the same database.

High-rigidity tents:



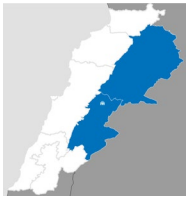
To enhance shelter sustainability, UNHCR, in partnership with local NGO HAND, piloted the distribution and installation of high-rigidity shelter kits within refugee settlements, in compliance with government-approved shelter regulations. To prolong the lifespan of shelters, 600 prefabricated wooden frames were manufactured in a workshop and erected on-site, effectively diminishing the necessity for frequent maintenance from a yearly base to a biennial one. Additionally, 1,225 refugees underwent training sessions to learn about assembling these more durable tents and empowering them with skills that can be reapplied in future relocations.

Biomass project:



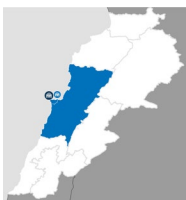
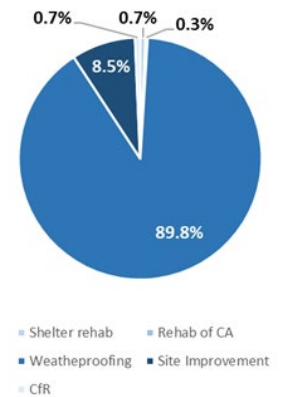
UNHCR revamped its winter assistance strategy by establishing biomass fuel production lines in Beqaa Valley's high-altitude areas, specifically Taanayel, Temnin al Fawka, and Qaraoun villages from agricultural waste. Launched in November 2023 in Taanayel, the local producer demonstrated market interest by promptly selling a portion of its production. The production line not only provides livelihoods for Lebanese and Syrian workers but also allocates a share for donation to vulnerable Syrian refugees in the ITS of the region with 15% of the production reserved for aid. Qaraoun and Temnin al Fawka production lines are expected to be fully operational by mid-2024. At mid and longer term, the use of biomass fuel will contribute to the shift from fossil fuel and hence bring critical behavioural change.

Focus on Field Offices



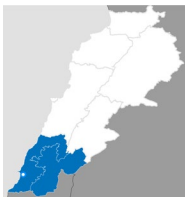
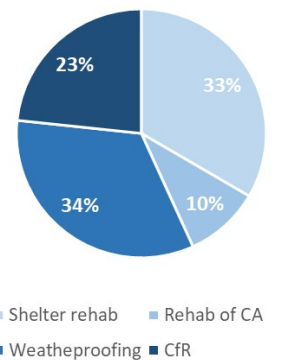
Bekaa

The UNHCR Zahle Sub Office oversees the entire Bekaa area, comprising Bekaa and Baalbek Hermel governorates, hosting the largest number of registered refugees in Lebanon². Nearly half reside in 3,557 ITS³ with challenging conditions. UNHCR prioritizes weatherproofing and site improvements within ITSs, alongside aiding vulnerable families beyond settlements through shelter rehabilitation and Cash for Rent assistance, ensuring comprehensive support for refugees' well-being and dignity.



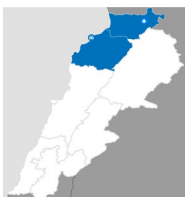
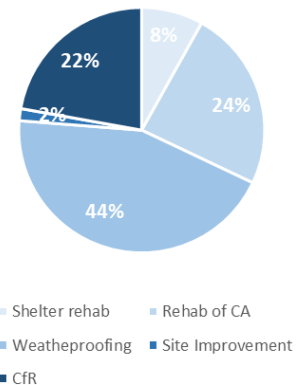
Beirut & Mount Lebanon (BML)

The UNHCR BML Field Office oversees Beirut and Mount Lebanon governorates, characterized on one hand by ultra-urbanized coastal areas and on the other hand sparsely populated mountain villages with 285 Informal Settlements (ISs). While only 34% of activities target vulnerable populations in ISs, the office predominantly addresses displacement in urban contexts. The exponential rental price surge of over 200%⁴ in 2023 heightened eviction risks, leading to secondary displacement³. To mitigate this risk, emphasis was placed on cash-for-rent assistance and interventions in residential shelters.



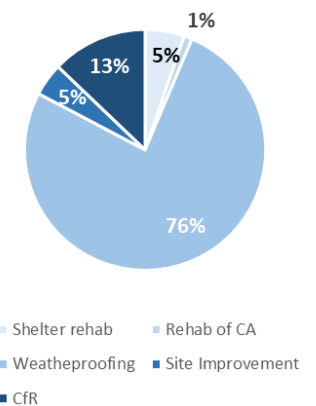
South

The UNHCR Tyre Field Office oversees operations in South Lebanon, covering the South and Nabatiyeh Governorates. Along the coastal area, notably around Saida, refugees reside in ITS, relying on agriculture for livelihoods. Elsewhere, the distribution of ITSs & peri-urban areas is more balanced. Approximately 12% of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR reside in South Lebanon, alongside refugee households and asylum-seekers from Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia, and other countries. diverse needs of displaced populations. originating from Iraq, Sudan, Ethiopia and other countries.



North

The UNHCR Sub-Office in Tripoli and the Field Office in Qobayat oversee operations in North and Akkar Governorates. Shelter activities target beneficiaries inside and outside ITS, with interventions implemented through Area-Based Approaches. Vulnerable areas are identified, and a multisectoral assistance approach covers diverse needs, including rental assistance, shelter and common area rehabilitation, and restoration of unoccupied and emergency temporary shelters to address specific protection cases.



² 38% according to the UNHCR registration Data

³ According to IAMP 113, there are 3557 active ITSs in Bekaa and baalback el Hermel.

⁴ According to the preliminary findings of VASyR 2023, BML have the highest percentage (13%) of households changing accommodation in the past year, the main reason was because the rent became too expensive with 200% increase in rental prices in BML, followed by eviction (14% in Beirut and 10% in ML)

Voices from the Field

Tripoli Sub Office



Abdallah and his family, consisting of his wife, two children, and two elderly parents who originally hail from Syria, take refuge in a rented house in Ayrounyeh village, North Lebanon. The house has become their temporary haven, as their journey has been marked by significant struggles. Over the years, they grappled with the financial strain of meeting rent payments and basic needs given their limited income. Unfortunately, their plight took a drastic turn when an unexpected fire engulfed their apartment during the night, rendering them homeless. Abdallah recounted the harrowing experience: *"My wife smelled the smoke and saw it coming from the kitchen. We had to evacuate quickly."* The fire, caused by an electrical issue in the kitchen, wreaked havoc, primarily affecting the kitchen itself, the interior wooden doors, and leaving all the

walls charred and emitting an unbearable odor.

"Putting effort into fixing it up... and suddenly finding yourself having to start from scratch," Abdallah expressed the disheartening reality of their situation. To make matters worse, the property owner blamed the family for the damage, compelling them to shoulder the repair costs. It was at this juncture that Abdallah learned about Concern, funded by UNHCR and actively working in the Ayrounyeh village. Desperate for assistance, he reached out, and to his relief, received a prompt response. UNHCR and CONCERN were implementing an area-based approach project in Ayrounyeh. This initiative strives to rehabilitate already occupied shelters and enhance the living conditions of the most vulnerable residents to bring houses up to standard and offer secure rental agreements free of charge for 12 months.

The property owner agreed to the proposition to re-construct and rehabilitate the structure, recognizing it as a humanitarian initiative that benefited both Syrian refugees and the Lebanese host communities. He acknowledged his own inability to make the necessary repairs. Following the completion of the work, a free-of-charge lease agreement for 12 months was signed between the Lebanese landlord and the Syrian tenant. Abdallah expressed his gratitude for the assistance that proved instrumental in rebuilding their lives and providing a stable home for his family.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors who have contributed to the shelter programme as well as major donors of flexible and unearmarked funds in 2023:

Australia | Austria | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Republic of Korea | Luxembourg | Monaco | Netherlands | Norway | Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity | Private donors | Qatar | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | CERF

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