UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Lebanon Emergency One-Month Impact Report

OCTOBER 2024

KEY FIGURES

10 ambulances and 60 trauma kits donated to Lebanese authorities

Cash assistance provided to over **275,100 Lebanese and refugees** in Lebanon

Non-food items provided to over **350,000 people** in Lebanon and Syria

13 community development centres operational in Lebanon offering in-person protection services

Legal counselling provided to **48,000 people** at Syrian border crossing points

114 community centres operational in Syria since before the escalation

Transportation services provided to **33,500 people** from Lebanon's Masnaa crossing to destinations within Syria

15 emergency roster staff deployed to support the response

Humanitarian context

A new displacement crisis is unfolding in Lebanon, with serious implications for the region and its people. On 23 September, Israel dramatically intensified its airstrikes on Lebanon - the deadliest and most devastating attacks the country has seen in decades. Many people in Lebanon had to instantly flee their homes, with nearly 120,000 people newly displaced within less than a week. Almost immediately after 23 September, a significant number of people started crossing into Syria to flee the violence.

After a month of escalating conflict, over 1.2 million people have been displaced and affected inside the country, with an additional 450,000 – Syrian refugees previously living in Lebanon, Lebanese nationals and third-country nationals - displaced into Syria. Many of the displaced in Lebanon are now living on the streets, with Syrian refugees facing significant challenges in accessing newly established collective shelters. In Syria, local capacities are also being stretched, with many Syrians returning destitute to their areas of origin, alongside Lebanese families who also require urgent support.

On 1 October, UNHCR declared a Level 3 Emergency – the highest level – for Lebanon and Syria to scale up response efforts and strengthen on-the-ground coordination. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) activated on 4 October a Humanitarian System-wide Scale-up for Lebanon, ensuring that IASC organizations collaboratively deploy all available resources and means to address the crisis at scale.

UNHCR's response

Lebanon

UNHCR – present in Lebanon since the 1960s – quickly stepped up its emergency response and collaboration with partners to support the government to provide urgent humanitarian and protection services for refugees and displaced Lebanese across the country. As part of the inter-agency response, UNHCR leads the Protection, Basic Assistance, and Shelter sectors, and co-leads the Health, Site Management and Coordination, and Social Stability sectors.

Basic Assistance

Prepositioned emergencies supplies have been quickly dispatched across Lebanon, with distributions well underway in collective sites in all regions of the country. Within a month, over 172,000 essential items – like mattresses, kitchen sets and solar lamps – had been distributed to 104,000 people.

UNHCR also provided cash assistance to over 275,100 Lebanese and refugees, enabling them to purchase essentials, pay rent and meet their protection needs. As part of these efforts, UNHCR expanded its existing multi-purpose cash assistance programme to affected vulnerable refugee families, in addition to providing both refugees and Lebanese with Emergency Protection Cash Assistance to address specific protection needs as well as Cash for Shelter support.

Health

With over 2,500 lives lost and 11,000 injured in the escalating violence, UNHCR has mobilized to support national health-care systems, donating 10 ambulances, 60 trauma kits, and 10 emergency health kits with medical supplies sufficient for up to 100,000 people.

To support refugees who are not eligible for government-funded health care in Lebanon, UNHCR has expanded its hospital network to 44 facilities – although some are only partially functional due to the current crisis – and has so far covered treatment costs for over 135 refugees critically wounded in the hostilities.

Following a confirmed cholera case in the north of the country, UNHCR is also coordinating with the national cholera task force to support response efforts, including requests for an oral cholera vaccine.

Protection

UNHCR continues to provide protection assistance and services, including case management, Emergency Protection Cash Assistance, access to specialized services such as legal counselling, and community-based support with an emphasis on high-risk cases. Over 3,700 displaced people

UNHCR Representative in Syria, Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, meets with Lebanese refugee Ali, 40, who fled from Lebanon to Aleppo, Syria, with his wife and three children. © UNHCR/Hameed Maarouf

– around half of whom are women and girls - have been referred by outreach volunteers for specialized support.

In areas not directly affected by strikes, UNHCR continues to operate and support community development centres, reaching over 10,000 people with protection, psychosocial, social and legal services through in-person, online and mobile activities. In locations where centres are not able to operate, UNHCR and partners have scaled up mobile protection efforts, providing counselling, information-sharing, referrals and other essential support to displaced people on the move and those hosted in 61 collective shelters.

To expand outreach, a new UNHCR Lebanon WhatsApp channel was launched and is now sharing information on awareness, security and emergency support to 49,000 subscribers. UNHCR's Lebanon Help page – providing protection advice and guidance – has recorded over 480,000 visits, including 67,000 on the dedicated emergency page launched on 1 October.

Amid a rise in anti-refugee rhetoric, UNHCR also continues its advocacy efforts to ensure equitable access to emergency assistance by all affected populations.

Shelter

The Government of Lebanon has designated over 1,000 sites, including many schools, as collective shelters, with UNHCR and partners racing to provide upgrades and repairs including partitioning, weather proofing and rehabilitation of water and sanitation utilities. UNHCR is targeting 420 collective sites housing 16,000 families, and has so far assessed 360 sites, with work ongoing or completed for 135 thus far.

Whole of Syria

UNHCR – present in Syria since 1991 – is coordinating the inter-agency response to the influx and leads the Protection and Shelter/NFI sectors in Syria. At five formal border crossings, UNHCR, in partnership with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), provides immediate assistance to new arrivals through established Border Health and Protection Support Points, as well as support upon their arrival at destinations within Syria.

Basic Assistance

UNHCR has helped over 33,500 people with transport from the Masnaa crossing in Lebanon, hit twice by air strikes, to the Syrian border and onward to their intended destinations inside Syria. Syria's temporary waiver of the mandatory $100 exchange required for entry helped reduce decongestion at the border.

Over 250,000 people have received non-food items like blankets, mattresses and kitchen items, to help ease their transition, with a further 32,000 core relief and winter items and 27,500 food parcels distributed to those arriving in north-east Syria.

Health

Through partners, UNHCR is providing medical assistance, including primary and emergency health services via SARC-run mobile clinics, reaching over 2,000 individuals with emergency medical services at border points.

Protection

UNHCR and its legal partners Syria Trust and SARC provided legal assistance to an estimated 48,000 individuals at crossing points, while more than 18,000 displaced people in Syria have accessed legal, medical, and protection services through UNHCR's pre-existing network of 114 community centres and mobile teams.

In north-east Syria, UNHCR has provided legal counselling and in-kind medical assistance to 2,090 people in Al Raqqa, Al Hasakeh and Deir Az-Zor.

In north-west Syria, UNHCR has mobilized community protection networks, outreach teams, and protection monitors to monitor new arrivals and inform them of available assistance and provide referrals to specialized services.

Shelter

UNHCR installed three rub-halls at the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point to expand the resting area to host over 500 new arrivals, as many are arriving exhausted from making the journey on foot following airstrikes on the area.

Similarly, in north-east Syria, UNHCR installed emergency shelter facilities at the Tabqa crossing point to serve as support stations for new arrivals, facilitating access into Al-Hasakeh. In north-west Syria, UNHCR set up four shaded areas to provide temporary shelter and service hubs for individuals awaiting entry at border points.

Other countries

UNHCR is also monitoring arrivals into other countries in the region, including Iraq where some 19,000 people, mostly Lebanese, have arrived, and coordinating with local authorities and partners to gather information and adjust the response as needed.

Shaza, Syrian refugee in Lebanon

Shaza is originally from Damascus, but fled the crisis in her own country years ago to seek safety in Lebanon. A mother of three and grandmother of six, she was ill-prepared to flee again when the airstrikes hit.

"We left with just the clothes we were wearing. We didn't have time to do anything else," she said. Amid the hardships, Shaza used to volunteer with an NGO, and even now is helping survivors - like herself - as much as possible.

"We hope that the situation gets better and that we can go back to our home, to go back to our safe life. I hope safety prevails in all countries."

Syrian refugee Shaza, 59, centre, sits with family members at their temporary lodgings in west Beirut, after fleeing their home in Burj Barajneh refugee camp. © UNHCR/Ximena Borrazas

Ongoing needs

Immediate support is critical for Lebanese and refugee populations in the region, especially as winter approaches. Single-digit temperatures, snow and freezing rain will severely impact families living in makeshift shelters or on the streets in Lebanon, and those returning to war-torn Syria. People forced to flee urgently need support to access adequate shelter and receive essential items to help them stay warm and safe. They also need medical care to treat chronic illnesses and diseases like pneumonia and respiratory illnesses that thrive in the cold weather.

Amid the tragic loss of life and large-scale displacement, this catastrophic escalation in hostilities is unfolding against the backdrop of a severe economic crisis in both Lebanon and Syria. In Syria, early recovery efforts will be critical to boost the capacity of host communities and to assist those returning under adverse circumstances.

Inter-agency appeals

The **Inter-Agency Flash Appeal for Lebanon** was launched to support the Government-led emergency response and facilitate the swift delivery of humanitarian assistance by partners. The appeal seeks $425.7 million to assist 1 million people affected by the crisis from October to December 2024, with UNHCR's share totaling $111 million.

The **Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria** was launched by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. This appeal aims to support Syria's efforts to protect and assist Syrians, Lebanese refugees, other individuals fleeing Lebanon, and host community members. It seeks $324 million from October 2024 to March 2025 to assist 480,000 new arrivals and host community members, with UNHCR's requirements amounting to $124.9 million.

Donor acknowledgement

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors for this emergency response and the related funding appeal. Donors that contributed $100,000 and above to the emergency response:

Czechia | Denmark | European Union | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Norway | Russian Federation | Sweden | UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) | Sweden for UNHCR | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | Calzedonia | Novo Nordisk Foundation

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Australia | Australia for UNHCR | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Finland | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Japan for UNHCR | Luxembourg | Netherlands | Norway | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Spain | Sweden | Sweden for UNHCR | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | United States of America | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe and private donors in Italy, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea.

Flexible funding

Flexible funds help UNHCR to prepare for the unpredictable, to kick-start an emergency response, and to help displaced people in forgotten or under-resourced crises. They also enable UNHCR to plan and manage resources efficiently and effectively to help save and transform lives.

Without flexible funding, we would not be able to properly prepare for any new emergency that may arise. Without flexible funding, the first phase of our emergency response, which delivers thousands of emergency supplies, essential shelter and protection assistance to families in need, would struggle to get off the ground.

Flexible funding is especially important as our emergency response develops, and we provide longer-term support to displaced people and their host communities. When emergencies fade from the spotlight, flexible funding enables us to help those who are suffering most.

Cover photo: UNHCR, and partners, provide support for Syrian and Lebanese people who have arrived at the Joussieh border crossing in Homs governorate, Syria, fleeing intense Israeli bombardments in Lebanon. © UNHCR/Ayham Al Kady

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