UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency LEBANON



LEBANON EMERGENCY FLASH UPDATE

17 January 2025

Residents return to their damaged homes in South Lebanon. © UNHCR/Houssam Hariri

113,578
Internally displaced people in Lebanon
(source: IOM/DTM)

871,859
Persons who moved from place of displacement
(source: IOM/DTM)

87,000
Lebanese and refugee arrivals from Syria

Situation overview

- Since the cessation of hostilities, 871,859 displaced people—largely Lebanese—have moved from their place of displacement (IOM) within Lebanon.
- The situation continues to be challenging for those returning to their place of origin or to other communities impacted by the conflict, who are facing difficulties in accessing essential services, including food, clean water, healthcare, and shelter.
- Violations of the ceasefire agreement have continued to be reported, with insecurity persisting particularly in the south. Access restrictions imposed by the Israeli army to more than 60 localities in southern Lebanon create additional challenges for displaced populations trying to return as well as for humanitarian actors who are not able to access border villages.
- Cross-border movements between Lebanon and Syria continues via official and unofficial crossing points, with the Masnaa official border crossing in Bekaa being the only crossing open for vehicle traffic. Movements continue on a daily basis at a low but steady rate, mostly through Masnaa. While refugees continue to express interest in return to Syria, many continue to cite challenges and request UNHCR support with transportation, shelter, and continued support for returning IDPs.
- In Syria, clashes between the new authorities and armed groups are ongoing. While insecurity remains a concern, the situation continues to rapidly shift, with difficulties in predicting how the coming period will evolve. Through its close contact with Syrian refugee communities in Lebanon, UNHCR has been monitoring refugee sentiments and concerns around return since 8 December. Most Syrians are expressing an interest in temporality visiting Syria to assess the situation. However, until now many are adopting a “wait and see” approach to observe how the situation evolves in Syria and reach clarity with respect to issues such as assistance. At the same time, some Syrian refugees are reportedly exploring a phased approach to return, with members of the family returning first to assess the situation and prepare the grounds for the family to settle in Syria.

LEBANON

UNHCR RESPONSE

UNHCR continues to respond to the needs of refugees and Lebanese displaced across Lebanon, returning IDPs within Lebanon and new arrivals from Syria, by providing protection services, emergency cash assistance, core relief items, access to safe shelter, health care, and psychosocial support.

RESPONSE TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

- UNHCR is coordinating closely with the authorities and other humanitarian organizations, undertaking protection monitoring and providing protection services, emergency cash assistance, core relief items, access to safe shelter, health care, and psychosocial support for those who remain in displacement. UNHCR is leading the Protection Sector in collecting information about the situation of internally displaced people (IDPs), including those who have returned to their pre-conflict places of residence.
- An extensive Outreach Volunteer (OV) network remain active across Lebanon, ensuring that displaced persons are supported, have access to information and that community priorities inform the response. Since 1st January, OVs reached 5,418 people and identified 801 persons at heightened risk, including those lacking shelter and basic necessities, persons with chronic and serious medical conditions, those at risk of evictions, and other urgent high-risk cases.
- Trends are also monitored and community questions are collected across all Accountability to Affected People (AAP) platforms. UNHCR provides a range of accessible and rapid channels of communication with affected people - including a HELP page and a WhatsApp Channel – which are used to inform affected people about procedures, structures, and processes, so that they can make informed decisions and choices.
- 19 Community Development Centres (of 31) are currently open to receive refugees, Lebanese IDPs, and host community. Of the 12 closed Centres, four are in unreachable areas and eight are damaged. Assessments are underway to determine damage and needed rehabilitation. Despite the immense damages to Social Development Centres (SDCs) in the South, UNHCR's partners continue to reach displaced Lebanese and refugees, as well as persons who have returned to their homes, through mobile activities.
- In January, UNHCR began supporting eight collective shelters hosting displaced Lebanese in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with activities such as site management to coordinate services, shelter rehabilitation, information, psychosocial support and referral to services.

RESPONSE TO RETURNING IDPs WITHIN LEBANON

- For families returning to their areas of origin, risks of mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), explosive remnants, structural damage, and winter exposure persist. There are also continuing and urgent needs for shelter to cope with damaged housing and infrastructure, support for essential services, especially for displaced families returning to their communities.
- UNHCR and partners continue to address the needs of communities who have had their houses heavily damaged or destroyed by the violence. Additionally, core relief items including blankets, mattresses, pillows, and kitchen sets have been distributed to families in need.
- UNHCR and partner frontliners are equipped with counselling lines regarding returns and access to services following the Lebanon ceasefire. They cover key protection concerns related to physical safety, access to services, winter weather risks, sophisticated scams (risk of exploitation and kidnapping), cross border returns and social cohesion. The emergency HELP page includes contacts for legal aid on housing, land, and property issues for Lebanese citizens.
- UNHCR and partners are reaching people in dire need with winterization assistance, including high thermal blankets and plastic sheets.
- Protection partners are also identifying and responding to the needs of returnees who continue to face protection risks arising from displacement.
- UNHCR and partners conducted a refugee community feedback on returns aimed at understanding refugee communities' perception and concerns since early December 2024 around the evolving situation in Syria. Findings cover key protection concerns about lack of safety and insecurity inside Syria, concerns about limited access to education, health care, shelter rehabilitation, financial assistance and livelihoods in Syria, especially raised by women and children. Refugee feedback, including through quantitative intention surveys to ensure that programmes and activities are in line with refugee priorities and concerns.
- UNHCR and partners started distributing emergency shelter kits, including plastic sheeting, timber, and toolboxes for sealing openings, repairing locks, and replacing doors, to IDPs returning to their damaged homes in South Lebanon. These quick fix kits are for simple repairs of damaged houses or improvement of temporary shelter with a main purpose to permit weatherproofing against the elements, and mitigation of protection concerns.

- Two primary health care facilities located in South Lebanon and supported by UNHCR have resumed their mental health activities.

RESPONSE FOR NEW ARRIVALS

- While return from Lebanon to Syria continues, the fall of the Assad government has also resulted in newly arriving Syrian families seeking refuge in Lebanon, including some Lebanese families.
- UNHCR continues to monitor the population movements and engage with refugee and Lebanese returnees' communities to respond to mobilize the response to the most immediate humanitarian needs and track intentions, address questions and ensure dissemination of relevant information to the communities.
- UNHCR and partners are provided with *if-asked* counselling lines for Syrians in Lebanon in response to the rapidly evolving situation in Syria.
- As of 15 January, the government's Disaster Risk Management reports approximately 86,000 arrivals from Syria in Baalbek Governorate, including 20,000 Lebanese. Among the arrivals, some 34,000 people, mostly Syrians, are living in 210 informal Collective Shelters and another 52,100 are living in the community. Visits to collective sites indicate urgent heating/fuel, hygiene, and food needs. Additionally, newly arrived families have been observed in other areas including in South Lebanon.
- Since 1st January, 37 new arrivals have received hospitalization care services from UNHCR-contracted hospitals.

Useful links

- Lebanon updates
- Regional Flash Update #9

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UNHCR LEBANON

Emergency Response Update

(as of 31 december 2024)

Background

Since the onset of hostilities in October 2023, UNHCR has reached over 1,000,000 Lebanese and refugees across Lebanon with key assistance in the Basic Assistance, Protection, Shelter and Site Management and Coordination sectors. Beyond it's operational offices in Beirut, Qobayat, Tripoli and Zahle, UNHCR also continues to assist in hard to reach areas, with 12 convoys since the escalation of conflict in September 2024.

PROTECTION

	Lebanese	Refugees
MHPSS	4,270 Ind. (17%)	48,239 Ind. (83%) — 52,509 Total Ind.
EPCA	53,875 Ind. (64%)	32,860 Ind. (36%) — 86,735 Total Ind.
Awareness & Outreach	27,729 Ind. (5%)	536,785 Ind. (95%) — 564,514 Total Ind.
Specialized Referral	2,058 Ind. (6%)	41,392 Ind. (94%) — 43,450 Total Ind.



BASIC ASSISTANCE

	Lebanese	Refugees
MCAP (temporary expansion)	None (0%)	317,307 Ind. (100%) — 317,307 Total Ind.
CRI (inside Sites)	147,888 Ind. (96%)	6,014 Ind. (4%) — 153,902 Total Ind.
CRI (Outside Sites)	73,107 Ind. (70%)	30,720 Ind. (30%) — 103,827 Total Ind.

SHELTER

	Lebanese	Refugees
Cash for Shelter	80,411 Ind. (89%)	9,620 Ind. (11%) — 58,311 Total Ind.
Repair of collective sites	50,959 Ind. (96%)	2,213 Ind. (4%) — 53,172 Total Ind.
Shelter kits	115 Ind. (42%)	160 Ind. (58%) — 275 Total Ind.
Partitions to support CS	6,000 Ind. (100%)	None (0%) — 6,000 Total Ind.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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