



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

LEBANON



## LEBANON UPDATE

April-May 2025

UNHCR and partners distributing core relief items to newly arrived refugees in Akkar, North Lebanon. © UNHCR/Houssam Hariri

### Situation overview

**501,126**

Syrians have crossed back to Syria from neighbouring countries since the fall of the Assad regime on 8 December 2024.  
(source: UNHCR)

**170,078**

Syrians estimated to have crossed from or via Lebanon into Syria since 8 December 2024 (as of 15 May)  
(source: UNHCR)

**108,344**

Estimated new arrivals of Syrians into Lebanon since 8 December 2024 (as of 15 May)  
(source: UNHCR)

**90,020**

Internally displaced people in Lebanon.  
(source: IOM/DTM)

- Since 8 December 2024, UNHCR estimates some **501,126 Syrians have crossed back to Syria** via neighboring countries, including 170,078 via or from Lebanon - half of whom were transiting or temporarily returning. Returns and movements occur through both official and unofficial border crossings, creating a fluid picture.
- **Hostilities in Syria's Tartous, Latakia, Homs, and Hama Governorates since early March have led to ongoing displacement into Lebanon's North and Akkar Governorates.** Although the number of new arrivals has slowed due to increased border controls on the Syrian side, families continue to flee under duress into Lebanon through unofficial border points. Nearly 90 per cent of newly arrived individuals are residing within host communities. In response to growing needs, municipalities have opened additional collective shelters to accommodate those without other housing options. However, these shelters are overcrowded and lack adequate sanitation facilities.
- As of 19 May, **the Baalbek Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is reporting approximately 78,600 arrivals from Syria** since 8 December, including approximately 21,650 arrivals in Baalbek Governorate, North Bekaa, residing in 165 informal collective shelters, and approximately 56,981 residing in the community.
- So far in 2025, **112,396 individuals have been inactivated from UNHCR's registration records in Lebanon** due to verified return or presumed return, including 70,445 individuals who fled during the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon in 2024 and who remained in Syria.
- As of 30 April 2025, **UNHCR Lebanon had received only 20 per cent of its required funding**, with limited additional contributions expected. This significant shortfall remains a major concern, as it directly affects our ability to support refugees, returnees, and host communities in 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, cash assistance, core relief items, health care, shelter and psychosocial support.

### VOLUNTARY RETURN

- As of 15 May, some **501,126 Syrians** have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries, including 170,078 via or from Lebanon.
- Following the release of UNHCR's Regional **Operational Framework for Voluntary Return**, UNHCR in Lebanon and humanitarian partners have developed the Inter-Agency Voluntary Return Action Plan to assist an estimated 400,000 Syrian refugees, including 5,000 Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) with voluntary return to Syria from Lebanon as a best-case scenario. Within this framework, a new Return Chapter to the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) has been drafted, including an Action Plan matrix for the relevant sectors supporting voluntary return in Lebanon.
- UNHCR continues to coordinate return related preparation and implementation through the Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG) and is engaging with the Government of Lebanon on creating pathways for voluntary return, anchored in protection principles and guided by the voices of refugees, to ensure that Syrian refugees who, fully informed, voluntary choose to return home are supported to do so; and that international protection is secured for those Syrian refugees who choose to remain in Lebanon. UNHCR was invited to a meeting of the Interministerial Committee for Refugees, to further socialize the Inter-Agency Voluntary Return Action Plan, which was positively received and pending further finalization with the General Security Office (GSO).
- Moreover, UNHCR Lebanon has reinforced information to refugees on voluntary return through the **UNHCR Lebanon Help Page** and community structures, as well as the provision of return counselling through its National Call Centre, with over 3,000 individual counselling sessions conducted since March.
- To gain deeper insight into return-related trends, intentions, barriers, and capacities and support the design of the voluntary return programmes, UNHCR and partners conducted a **Community Dialogue** with 561 refugees and key informants across all governorates in Lebanon. Many Syrian refugees highlighted that a family member had already returned to Syria for temporary go-and-see visit to assess the situation, while those who expressed interest in permanent return included Syrians who do not face a particular security risk, those with financial means and homes to return to in Syria, as well as those with children out-of-school and those unable to cope in Lebanon. While men expressed willingness to return once the situation stabilizes, women were largely influenced by considerations related to children's safety and education as well as available services and women's rights. Older persons similarly cited access to services and family support as a key consideration while youth were more hesitant to return due to a lack of community ties and work opportunities.

### PRIORITIZED RESPONSE FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

- UNHCR is coordinating closely with the authorities and other humanitarian organizations, and providing protection services, cash assistance, core relief items, health care, and psychosocial support for vulnerable families.
- UNHCR provides monthly multi-purpose cash assistance (MCAP), including support for protection-related cases, to 219,723 refugees - ensuring that the most vulnerable received timely financial help to meet their urgent needs.
- In April, UNHCR and partners distributed core relief items, including blankets, mattresses, jerry cans, kitchen sets and solar lamps to some 41,400 Syrian refugees and Lebanese individuals living in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, the Bekaa, North and South Lebanon.
- In April, through its referral healthcare programme, UNHCR and its partners supported 2,400 refugees, including 1,260 deliveries, ensuring they have continuous access to secondary healthcare.
- UNHCR integrates mental health and psychosocial support into existing interventions. In April, 2,945 Syrian and Lebanese individuals, including persons with disabilities, received appropriate psychosocial support (PSS) services.
- In total, 26 community centres are open to receive refugees, Lebanese internally displaced persons (IDPs), and host community members across the country. Through the centres, 42,000 individuals received information and awareness sessions on available services, early marriage and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, and feedback and complaints mechanisms, including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

## RESPONSE FOR NEW ARRIVALS

- Due to the changed political and security environment as well as hostilities in Syria, new arrivals of 108,344 Syrians have been monitored since 8 December 2024.
- As of 20 May, the hostilities in the Tartous, Latakia, Homs and Hama Governorates of Syria in early March continue to displace people into the North and Akkar Governorates of North Lebanon. Newly arrived refugees are now located across 35 distinct locations predominantly in Akkar in 30 villages near to the border with Syria, reaching some 40,000 people in total. The continuing influx over preceding months is now becoming a protracted situation, with people still arriving in dire condition, while current response is greatly overstretched, insufficient to the growing needs and increasingly unsustainable due to lack of funding support.
- Additionally, Baalbek Disaster Risk Management (DRM) is reporting approximately 78,600 arrivals from Syria since 8 December, including approximately 21,650 arrivals in Baalbek Governorate, North Bekaa, residing in 165 informal collective shelters (CS), and approximately 56,981 residing in the community, including Lebanese returnees. The numbers have fluctuated due to internal movements, after reaching a peak of approximately 90,000 earlier this year.
- At the request of the Government, UNHCR has included provisions in its Referral Health Care Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure new arrivals have access to life-saving hospitalization care. In April, 27 new arrivals received hospitalization care in UNHCR-contracted hospitals.

## IMPACT OF UNDER FUNDING

UNHCR, alongside the entire humanitarian community, is experiencing an overall unexpectedly large and swift downturn in funding in 2025. Funding uncertainty and limited visibility on substantial funding projections is already forcing difficult decisions on activities possible to support, with UNHCR Lebanon focusing primarily on lifesaving and core mandate activities with both flexible and earmarked funds available.

Despite generous support from a wide range of donors, UNHCR was funded under 60 per cent of the USD 545.2 required for its response in Lebanon in 2024, as part of an ongoing downward trajectory of funding. As of 30 April 2025, UNHCR Lebanon is only 20 per cent funded.

A number of those in need will no longer receive support, while crucial activities around supporting return and those still in Lebanon may be deeply affected if more funds cannot be found:

- UNHCR had to discontinue 347,000 individuals from the UNHCR only cash component of the joint programme UNHCR-WFP joint cash programme as of April, and will now support 216,700 people until June 2025 only.
- Return related activities for up to 400,000 people may be in jeopardy if support for planning and assistance is not forthcoming
- 83,000 IDPs and returnees can no longer receive cash for shelter support.
- 56,000 people can no longer receive Emergency Protection Cash Assistance.
- 40,000 refugees will no longer be able to access primary healthcare by April 2025. Additionally, 45,000 people, including pregnant women, will no longer receive secondary healthcare as of December 2025.
- 15,000 children will no longer benefit from community-based learning and education retention support. This comes on top of changes to education access in Lebanon for the current school year, which was also heavily impacted by the conflict in late 2024.
- Institutional support has been substantially reduced, including curtailing all community support projects for refugee hosting areas.

Despite these difficult and unprecedented times, UNHCR is committed to staying and delivering in Lebanon.

### FUNDING | UNHCR is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to this operation

Australia | Canada | Denmark | European Union | France | Germany | Italy | Japan | Luxembourg | Monaco | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Republic of Korea | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | United States of America | Central Emergency Response Fund

### Other softly earmarked or unearmarked contributions:

Australia | Belgium | Canada | Denmark | Finland | Germany | Ireland | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | Norway | Republic of Korea | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Private donors

**CONTACT** | Juliette Stevenson | Senior External Relations Officer | [stevenson@unhcr.org](mailto:stevenson@unhcr.org) | Beirut, Lebanon  
Fabien Faivre | External Relations Officer | [faivre@unhcr.org](mailto:faivre@unhcr.org) | Beirut, Lebanon