

Lebanon

August 2025

The socio-economic downturn coupled with the compounding shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut blast, the Gaza situation and the escalation of hostilities in late 2024, have all contributed to **nine out of ten Syrian refugees** being in need of humanitarian assistance to cover their basic needs.

With the change of Government in Syria December 2024, nearly 272,135 Syrians crossed from or via Lebanon. While **some explore return, issues of housing, employment and limited services remain key concerns**, especially for women and youth.

In close coordination with the Government of Lebanon and partners, 6,270 Syrians have departed under UNHCR's **Self-Organized Voluntary Return Programme**, which establishes clear procedures and protection measures for individuals choosing to return through official crossings.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

(Registered refugees)

 Syria **661,367**

 Iraq **3,907**

 Sudan **3,369**

 Other **2,086**

* Registration as of August 2025.

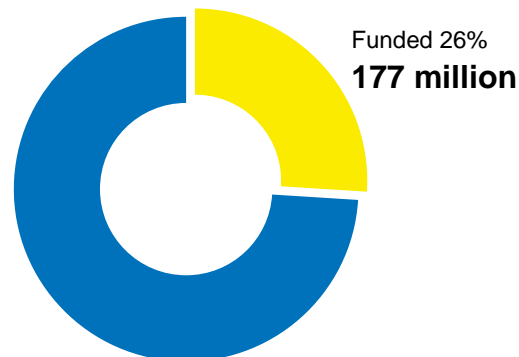
** UNHCR registration of Syrian refugees in Lebanon has been suspended since May 2015 through a decision by the Government of Lebanon.

***The Lebanon Response Plan refers to 1.3 million Syrians in Lebanon including those registered with UNHCR.

FUNDING (AS OF 31 AUG 2025)

USD 679.6 million

requested for Lebanon operation in 2025


 Unfunded 74%
502.6 million

UNHCR PRESENCE:

262 National Staff

40 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Beirut

3 Field Offices in Beirut, Tripoli and Zahle


UNHCR assisting Syrians during their return movement under the Organized Voluntary Return Programme to support refugees in Lebanon who voluntarily decide to return ©UNHCR

Operational Context

Since October 2019, Lebanon has been grappling with compounding crises. The country continues to face its most severe economic downturn since the end of the civil war in 1990, further strained by a prolonged political deadlock with a President elected in January 2025. The impact of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah continues to affect the south, despite a ceasefire in place since 27 November 2024, with intermittent violations and access restrictions continuing in border and urban areas.

Following the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria on 8 December 2024, cross-border movements between Syria and Lebanon have steadily increased. As of August 2025, UNHCR estimates that over [821,586,282 Syrians](#) have crossed back to Syria from neighbouring countries, including [272,135 via or from Lebanon](#). However, these figures largely reflect pendular or temporary movements, rather than confirmed durable returns. Many individuals are returning to Syria for short-term visits to assess conditions in their areas of origin before making a decision to return permanently.

As of 31 August, an estimated at least [97,627 Syrians arrived in Lebanon since 8 December 2024](#), including 65,070 still residing in Bekaa & Baalbek-EI Hermel and 21,646 still residing in Akkar & North since March 2025. Some 10,911 are reported in other areas, including due to onward internal movements from place of first arrival in Lebanon. Total numbers have fluctuated and reflect ongoing displacement within Lebanon as identification is still ongoing when people move between areas, meaning overall numbers may be higher, as limited return of these groups has taken place. The [situation](#) remains [complex](#) and [fluid](#), with many variables at play.

In close coordination with the Government of Lebanon (GoL), UNHCR continues to engage in efforts to facilitate voluntary return in a manner that upholds protection principles and supports informed decision-making by refugees. With the adoption of the Government's Returns Policy Paper, this commitment has been reinforced through the inclusion—for the first time—of a dedicated Return Chapter in the [Lebanon Response Plan \(LRP\)](#), [endorsed in July 2025](#). The plan highlights the collective commitment of the GoL, UN, and partners to principled and coordinated planning on return, while also addressing broader humanitarian and stabilization needs. UNHCR also previously released its [Operational Framework for Voluntary Return](#) to assist the voluntary return and reintegration in areas of origin.

UNHCR has formally launched its [Self-Organized Voluntary Return Programme](#), which establishes clear procedures and protection measures for individuals choosing to return through official crossings. As of the end of August after the launch of the programme, [6,270 Syrians have departed](#), while [114,996 people have expressed interest to return](#), though some showed hesitancy given the uncertain near- and long-term outlook in Syria, with considerations such as access to education, livelihoods, housing, land and property issues, and the ability to access humanitarian assistance in Syria. Many families are engaging in phased return, with individual members undertaking independent “go-and-see” visits to assess the situation before others follow.

UNHCR continues to support to refugees who, after receiving accurate and up-to-date information, voluntarily choose to return to Syria. Information is available through [UNHCR Help Page](#) and community structures. While individual counselling is provided through the National Call Center. In addition, UNHCR offers protection services and assistance throughout the return process to ensure returns are voluntary, safe, and dignified, as well as return cash grant. At the same time, UNHCR remains committed to supporting those who remain in Lebanon amid increasing vulnerabilities and deepening humanitarian needs.

Despite growing needs, a significant and worsening funding shortfall has led to the discontinuation or scaling down of key programmes, including education, health and basic assistance—affecting the ability to sustain essential protection and assistance for both refugees and Lebanese communities.

Working with Partners

- Under the auspices of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, UNHCR co-led the planning process to develop an integrated humanitarian and stabilization response framework in 2024, following detailed consultation across sectors. The [2024-2025 'Lebanon Response Plan' \(LRP\)](#) seeks to respond comprehensively to the impact of the multiple crises in Lebanon on both people and institutions in a holistic and integrated manner. Under the LRP, partners will advance four strategic objectives: 1) Enhance the protection of vulnerable people; 2) Provide immediate assistance to vulnerable people to ensure their critical needs are met; 3) Support service provision through national systems, including national rapid response capacity; 4) Reinforce Lebanon's economic, social and environmental stability.
- In 2025, UNHCR has partnership agreements with 21 partners, of which 13 are international and 8 are national.

Main Activities

Protection

- UNHCR continues to coordinate the protection response for refugees in Lebanon with the Government of Lebanon (GoL), UN agencies, and local and international partners, covering activities such as refugee registration, legal aid, civil documentation, psychosocial support, child protection, and prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), including case management and specialized services. UNHCR also identifies and refers refugees for resettlement to third countries.
- Following the closure of the Al Qoubaiyat office and a reduced staffing structure in Zahle and Tripoli, registration activities have been streamlined and centralized to Beirut. Mobile teams and an ongoing Presence Verification Exercise have been introduced to ensure continued access to protection and assistance services.
- UNHCR supports new arrivals through emergency in-kind assistance, based on the established geographic areas of responsibility, while ensuring access to life-saving hospital care through updated referral procedures, access to key protection services including for children and those impacted by Gender Based Violence, and monitors needs in informal collective shelters and host communities.
- UNHCR conducts Protection Monitoring with partners on an ongoing basis to analyse trends in the protection environment and risks facing refugees across the country.
- In close coordination with the GoL and partners, UNHCR is supporting the self-organized voluntary return of Syrian refugees through the [Self-Organized Voluntary Return program](#), launched on 1 July 2025. UNHCR is providing return cash, counselling and guidance on exit procedures through community structures, the National Call Center, and other channels ensuring that all returns are voluntary, safe, and dignified. In parallel, [UNHCR and IOM also launched the Organized Voluntary Repatriation Programme](#), providing transport and health screening support for those wishing to return in organized movements, though most continue to opt for self-organized returns. Around [350 people have already returned under this programme](#), with further regular departures scheduled.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- As part of its accountability to affected people, UNHCR ensures that women, men, girls and boys of diverse backgrounds are regularly consulted and engaged in decision-making. UNHCR, together with partners, empowers and builds refugees' capacities through Outreach Volunteers (OVs) and community engagement programmes.

- These are implemented in 26 operational community centres across the country—including Community Development Centres (CDCs) and Social Development Centres (SDCs)—which provide safe spaces to access information, seek services, learn new skills, and engage in community-based protection activities. Despite resource constraints, these centres continue to serve as critical platforms for identifying and referring individuals at heightened risk and providing localized support.

Health

- UNHCR operates a Referral Healthcare (RHC) Programme subsidizing hospitalization fees to facilitate refugees' access to hospital care. The programme is implemented through a cost-sharing scheme of payment for a significant portion of the hospital bills while refugees pay the remaining amount. The assistance includes obstetric care and urgent lifesaving and limb-saving interventions at hospitals through a network of contracted hospitals.
- In 2025, health support has been significantly reduced due to funding cuts affecting 40,000 refugees: subsidized primary health care services were phased out by mid-year and specialized mental health services were reduced, with no new enrolments in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programmes since March. These reductions affected services previously provided by UNHCR and partners across the country, including consultations for acute illnesses, vaccinations, maternal and child health care and treatment for chronic conditions. By the end of the year, hospitalization costs for refugees, including maternity and acute emergency care can no longer be supported due to funding cuts, affecting 45,000 refugees.

Shelter

- UNHCR aims to ensure the protection of vulnerable populations and contribute to social stability by improving access to physically adequate shelter and mitigating the impact of deteriorating shelter and economic conditions. Focus is placed on life-saving interventions in informal settlements and substandard urban areas.
- In 2025, shelter assistance has been significantly reduced by funding constraints, leading to the downscaling of key interventions and assistance limited to the most critical cases and affected sites, particularly for displaced families living in substandard conditions including new arrivals, with activities like cash assistance and repairs discontinued since March. Cash for shelter programme was drastically cut by 90% from reaching 95,000 to 11,000 in need, meaning 83,000 people no longer receive cash for shelter. 42,000 people will also no longer receive shelter kits or improvements, a cut of 20%.

Basic needs and core-relief items

- UNHCR assists vulnerable asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and refugees in meeting their most basic needs through cash-based and in-kind assistance.
- Since 2013, UNHCR has provided monthly Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MCAP) through ATM cards, enabling families to cover some of their essential costs such as rent, food, and healthcare, while contributing to the local economy.
- Despite increasing needs, severe funding cuts in 2025 forced UNHCR to discontinue 347,000 individuals from the UNHCR only cash component of the UNHCR-WFP joint cash programme. The transfer value of cash assistance for basic needs represents less than 50 per cent of the recommended transfer value to cover minimum basic needs.
- UNHCR and partners continue to distribute core relief items—such as blankets, mattresses, jerry cans, kitchen sets, and solar lamps—to new arrivals and vulnerable individuals. Around 134,000 items were distributed between July and August to assist vulnerable displaced people.

Financial Information

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who contributed to this operation as well as those who contributed to UNHCR with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.



With the support of the following private sector partners:

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