

Operational update

November 2025



Bekaa Valley, Lebanon | As winter temperatures drop, UNHCR and its partner MEDAIR provide weatherproofing kits to refugees living in informal tented settlements, reducing exposure to harsh weather and supporting safer, more dignified living conditions during the winter season ©UNHCR

Operational context

- Lebanon continued to witness repeated ceasefire violations and cross-border strikes, particularly in the South, amid near-daily Israeli airstrikes. UNIFIL reported an intensification in mid-November, with waves of strikes across southern Lebanon and an expansion beyond previously observed operational patterns. An airstrike in Saida resulted in 13 fatalities and multiple injured, while a subsequent strike in southern Beirut killed five individuals and damaged residential areas. Earlier, on 30 October, [UNIFIL expressed deep concern over an Israeli armed incursion in Blida](#), noting it as a violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and Lebanon's sovereignty, and reiterated its call for respect of the cessation of hostilities and the implementation of Resolution 1701.
- Lebanon continues to host the highest number of refugees per capita globally, with – as of end of November – an estimated 1.14 million Syrians known to UNHCR, including 590,320 refugees registered before the Government's suspension in 2015. Since 8 December 2024, an additional [112,089 Syrians have arrived in three waves](#), settling primarily in Akkar, Baalbek-Hermel, Bekaa, and North governorates. As of end-November, Lebanon also hosts 11,003 refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities.
- Since July, UNHCR continues to facilitate the voluntary return of Syrian refugees, in line alignment with the Government's July return policy and the Exchange of Letters between UNHCR and the Government of Lebanon. [By end of November, 45,195 Syrians had been supported to return home, while UNHCR continues to respond to calls from Syrians expressing an interest in the process](#). As of end-November, UNHCR has inactivated 379,103 Syrians from its records, due to confirmed or presumed returns.
- The sharp funding reductions at the beginning of 2025 has forced UNHCR to reduce the scope or phase out critical programmes, such as secondary healthcare, shelter support and elements of basic assistance, significantly limiting support to vulnerable households. By the end of October, UNHCR is [only 26 per cent funded against its requirements](#).

Key Population figures

1.14 M Syrians known to UNHCR
the most vulnerable of whom need protection and assistance

112,089 Syrians known to have arrived
since December 2024

379,103 Syrians inactivated by UNHCR Lebanon due to known or presumed returns in 2025
45,195 individuals (9,504 families) supported to voluntarily return

* Registration as of end of November 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 2025 refers to 1.4 million Syrians in Lebanon including those registered with UNHCR.

HIGHLIGHTS

One year after the fall of the former Syrian government in December 2024, UNHCR released the [report Coming Home: One Year into Syria's Transition](#), which compiles regional findings on refugee return dynamics, protection trends and evolving conditions for durable solutions across host countries and inside Syria.

The [report highlights that the political transition has made voluntary return a more tangible option for many Syrians](#), resulting in increased movements from neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, while also noting that most refugees continue to adopt a cautious and phased approach to return.

In Lebanon, these [findings mirror the feedback UNHCR is receiving from refugees through the protection monitoring and through return counselling conversations and exchanges with refugees contacting the National Call Centre and community centres](#). UNHCR's [counselling](#) helps refugees make informed decisions on return and undertake necessary preparations, such as updating civil status documentation, and getting guidance on how to access basic services and assistance in areas of return.

As return movements from Lebanon continue, the report underscores that Lebanon remains a critical host country during this transition phase, requiring the preservation of protection space and sustained humanitarian assistance to ensure that return decisions are not driven by pressure, loss of support or deteriorating conditions in the host country, alongside continued investment inside Syria to enable safe, dignified and sustainable reintegration.

In November, UNHCR continued counselling and supporting refugees who made the decision to return to Syria. A refresher workshop on Voluntary Repatriation was also conducted for 36 partner social workers to strengthen accurate information-sharing and address misinformation. By month's end, [45,195 individuals \(9,504 families\) had been supported to repatriate and received return cash assistance, while 74,231 individuals \(13,897 cases\) who at some point had called the National Call Centre were in the process of being contacted to verify their interest in supported return](#).

Those assisted to return were primarily residing in Bekaa, Baalbek and Hermel (33%), the North and Akkar (31%), and Beirut and Mount Lebanon (28%), with Homs remaining the primary destination. Most (94%) of UNHCR-supported refugees opted to self-organize their returns through Arida, Qaa and Masnaa border points, while 6% opted for the organized programme, with transportation arranged by IOM.

Since July, UNHCR and IOM have [facilitated 11 organized return movements supporting 2,499 individuals](#), with additional movements planned for December. Since January 2025, UNHCR has inactivated 379,103 Syrian refugees from its records due to confirmed or presumed returns, reflecting the continued scale of movements back to Syria.

UNHCR PRESENCE IN LEBANON



COORDINATION & WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Since 2024, Lebanon has been operating under the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP), a two-year humanitarian–stabilization framework co-led by the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations. Building on the LCRP and 3RP, the LRP provides a unified platform to respond to the most critical protection and assistance needs of displaced Syrians, including new arrivals, alongside vulnerable Lebanese. A dedicated Returns Chapter, co-led by UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Affairs, guides support for voluntary repatriation in line with protection principles. UNHCR leads the Protection, Shelter, and Basic Assistance sectors, co-leads the GBV sub-sector and Cash Working Group, and chairs the Durable Solutions Working Group on return.

UNHCR has been present in Lebanon since 1962, and maintains a country office in Beirut and field offices in Beirut, Tripoli and Zahle. In 2025, it is working with 21 partners to implement protection and humanitarian assistance activities. UNHCR also works closely with national institutions to strengthen response capacity and ensure complementarity with government efforts. However, with resources increasingly constrained, its ability to sustain these programmes will depend on urgent donor support. Without renewed commitment, the impact on vulnerable refugees and host communities amid Lebanon's fragile context will be immense.



PROTECTION

- Since 8 December 2024, new groups of Syrians have arrived to Lebanon in several waves, mainly to the Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel (65,279), followed by Akkar and the North (31,072), while 15,738 are staying in other areas, including Beirut, Mount Lebanon and the South. Following late-November 2025 protests and unrest in parts of Syria, UNHCR has been monitoring small numbers of new arrivals into Bekaa and North and Akkar in coordination with national authorities. As of end-November, [112,089 Syrians are known to have arrived in Lebanon since December 2024](#).
- UNHCR and partners continue providing life-saving assistance to the recent arrivals, including in-kind support and emergency health services, while advocating for access to documentation, freedom of movement, needs-based assistance and dignified accommodation.
- UNHCR and partners continued outreach activities in North, Akkar and the Bekaa, including through Mobile Information Desks providing counselling to and referrals of post-December 2024 arrivals, and engagement with the authorities on return trends, preparedness measures and support needs.



With winter setting in, refugees across the country are facing worsening conditions. In Tyre, South Lebanon, Bushra, Shaaban and Mohammad, Syrian refugees, explain how heavy rain floods their makeshift shelter, soaking clothes and bedding and leaving the family exposed to the cold. UNHCR and partners continue to support vulnerable households with winter assistance, yet urgent funding is needed to ensure protection for those most at risk as temperatures drop. ©UNHCR

Under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), UNHCR, WFP and UNDP conducted a joint mission to the North and Akkar to assess the situation of Syrians who have arrived since March 2025, particularly those residing in collective shelters, and explore options for more appropriate, dignified and cost-efficient assistance modalities.

- The UNHCR Representative met with the Head of the General Security Office (GSO) in the Bekaa and with the Governors of [Bekaa](#) and [Baalbek-El Hermel](#) to discuss the operational context, contingency planning and return dynamics. Discussions reaffirmed UNHCR's strong cooperation with the Lebanese authorities on voluntary returns, preparedness measures, support to post-December 2024 arrivals and the need for sustained international solidarity and donor support. [UNHCR reiterated its commitment to sustainable voluntary returns, support to recovery and reintegration efforts inside Syria and continued assistance to refugees with high vulnerabilities.](#)
- In November, the General Security Office issued a decision regulating the conditions of the Syrian workforce in Lebanon, requiring Syrians holding UNHCR-based residency and engaged in employment to regularise their stay as workers by 31 March 2026. Protection Monitoring and preliminary 2025 VASyR findings have reaffirmed that lack of legal residency and civil documentation remains a key protection risk, with refugees raising concerns about impacts on livelihoods and access to education. [UNHCR, together with IOM and ILO, are discussing the implications of this new, positive decision and joint dissemination of its requirements with the GSO and the Ministry of Labour, to ensure a protection-sensitive implementation and that the Syrian refugee population is aware.](#)
- Child Protection (CP) case management continued to show strong results, with client feedback indicating [high satisfaction and improved outcomes](#) (95% found services useful; 92% reported improvements). Reviews also identified opportunities to strengthen accountability and consistency, including improved use of complaints mechanisms. Over [12,000 children, GBV survivors and refugees with specific needs have been supported with specialized case management between January and November 2025](#), while UNHCR continues to strengthen monitoring, with GBV and broader protection tools planned for rollout in 2026.
- UNHCR and partners continued to address statelessness in Lebanon through capacity-building and advocacy. In November, UNHCR's partner INTERSOS delivered a training on statelessness to 13 mukhtars in Tripoli, focusing on late birth registration and civil documentation, highlighting the continued need to strengthen local capacity to address documentation gaps among vulnerable families. In parallel, UNHCR's partner Frontiers convened an expert dialogue on proposed reforms to Lebanese nationality legislation, bringing together Members of Parliament, judges, government officials, civil society and media to advance discussion on rights protection and legal reform.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE

- UNHCR continues to support a network of [26 Community Development Centres \(CDCs\) across Lebanon](#), functioning as one-stop shops that provide updated information through awareness sessions and facilitate access to protection and assistance services. Through CDCs and mobile outreach, UNHCR and partners support persons with specific needs through case management, psychosocial support, legal aid and life-skills activities, while promoting empowerment, self-reliance and resilience through skills development. CDCs also strengthen community mobilization, engagement and participation, promote inclusion and barrier-free access for vulnerable groups, and foster social cohesion with host communities, alongside development-oriented engagement with partners including ILO, UN Women and IOM under the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Between January and November 2025, more than [275,000 individuals have been supported through CDC activities](#), including mobile services such as voluntary repatriation awareness sessions, with over [60,000 people participating in skills trainings](#) and approximately [11,000 receiving psychosocial support](#). In parallel, UNHCR supports [440 Outreach Volunteers \(OVs\)](#) through partners to enhance community-based protection and outreach.
- The [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence \(GBV\) campaign was launched on 25 November](#), with the GBV Sub-Sector leading a coordinated response focused on preventing digital and technology-facilitated GBV. Over 120 activities were organized by 32 partners, and a dedicated workshop on technology with the participation of 16 partners, highlighting the need to systematically integrate online risks into GBV prevention and response. In the Bekaa, more than 15 partners conducted community-based activities targeting children, caregivers and teachers, while in Mount Lebanon, 31 activities implemented so far have reached over 300 individuals, strengthening awareness of safe online practices and available support services.



HEALTH

- UNHCR and partners continued to facilitate access to life-saving secondary healthcare for the most vulnerable refugees across Lebanon in November, as the operation moves toward the closure of the secondary healthcare programme due to funding shortfalls. [Between January and November, 23,000 individuals were assisted, including 13,000 women who received delivery care, with support focused on critical and obstetric emergencies](#). In parallel, UNHCR convened a meeting with UNICEF, IOM and Health Sector partners to discuss the identification, referrals and specialized arrangements for refugees planning to return to Syria and who have disabilities or serious medical conditions.



SHELTER & CORE-RELIEF ITEMS

- Preliminary reports from the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) 2025, shelter conditions for refugees in Lebanon remain critical, with 54% living in inadequate shelters, 20% in overcrowded settings, and 9% in structures not designed for residential use. Around 5,440 informal tented settlements (ITS) host approximately 180,000 refugees, many of whom are highly exposed to weather-related risks. There are also 210 collective shelters hosting about 37,500 Syrians, primarily post-December 2024 arrivals.
- [Between January and November, UNHCR supported nearly 123,000 refugees with shelter and winter assistance countrywide, including 16,440 weatherproofing kits benefiting almost 100,000 people, improvements to 62 flood prone ITS, and upgrades to 85 collective shelters and 952 substandard shelters to minimum standards.](#)
- Despite these efforts, shelter needs continue to exceed available resources, reinforcing the need for sustained support to ensure safe, dignified and adequate shelter conditions, particularly during the winter season.
- Across Lebanon, UNHCR distributed core relief items (CRIs) to 1,430 refugees in October, including blankets, mattresses, kitchen sets and solar lamps. In addition, 8,434 post-December 2024 arrivals received emergency relief assistance countrywide, including 993 individuals in the North, to address immediate needs and strengthen preparedness for the winter months.



BASIC NEEDS

- Cash assistance remains an essential lifeline for the most vulnerable refugee households, enabling them to meet urgent needs while preserving dignity and choice. However, funding constraints required UNHCR to reduce its multi-purpose cash (MPC) assistance by 60% since the start of the year. [UNHCR delivered multi-purpose cash assistance \(MPCA\) to 189,092 refugees \(44,865 households\) in November](#), prioritizing families facing severe economic hardship and heightened protection risks. With 60% of displaced Syrians living below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), they risk eviction, homelessness, begging, child labour, and unsafe informal work. While cash assistance is not enough for long-term stability, it is essential for survival.

Thank You!

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



With the support of the following private sector partners:

Australia for UNHCR | España con ACNUR | Private donors in MENA | Private donors in the UAE | Private donors in Kuwait | Private donors in France | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | UK for UNHCR | Other private donors

CONTACTS:

Juliette Stevenson, External Relations Officer, stenenso@unhcr.org

Fabien Faivre, External Relations Officer, faivre@unhcr.org