

Lebanon

February 2026

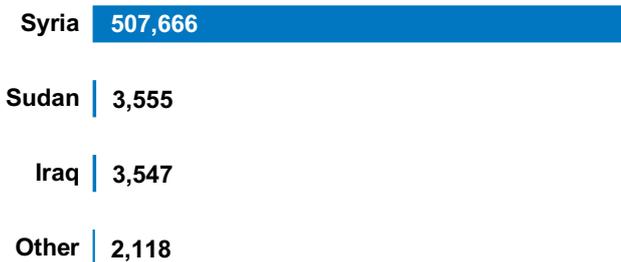
The prolonged socio-economic crisis compounded by COVID-19, the Beirut blast, and the escalation of hostilities in late 2024, have contributed to **68 per cent of Syrian refugees** living below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) (VASyR 2025) and unable to meet their basic needs in 2025.

With the change of Government in Syria in December 2024, cross-border movements have continued in both directions. **115,000 Syrians** are known to have **arrived in Lebanon**, while **552,413 Syrians** were **inactivated from UNHCR** Lebanon records due to confirmed or presumed returns.

In close coordination with the Government of Lebanon and partners, **57,444 Syrians** have departed under UNHCR's **Voluntary Return Programme**, which establishes clear procedures and protection measures for individuals choosing to return through official crossings.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

(Registered refugees)



* Registration as of end of January 2026.

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

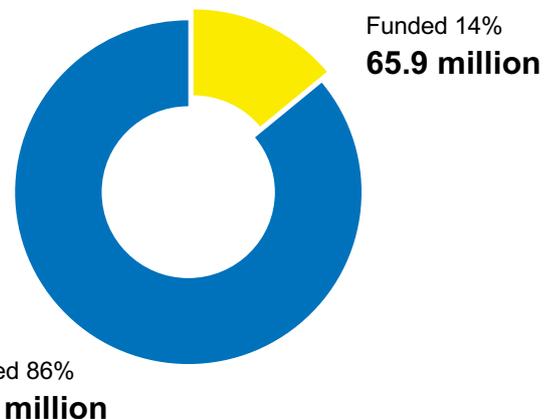
***The 2026 Lebanon Response Plan refers to 1.12 million displaced Syrians in Lebanon including those registered with UNHCR.

*** As of end of January - almost one million Syrians known to UNHCR are hosted in Lebanon

FUNDING (AS OF 28 FEB 2026)

USD 472.3 million

requested for Lebanon operation in 2026



UNHCR PRESENCE

302 National Staff

37 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country Office in Beirut

3 Field Offices in Beirut, Tripoli and Zahle



Families are checking in for an organized return convoy under UNHCR's facilitated return programme in Lebanon. Since its launch in July 2025, more than 57,000 people have supported under this programme ©UNHCR

Operational Context

Since 2019, Lebanon has been grappling with a confluence of compounding crises. The country continues to face its most severe economic downturn since the end of the civil war in 1990. The prolonged socio-economic crisis, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut Port explosion in 2020 and the escalation of hostilities in late 2024, has further deepened vulnerabilities across the country with UNHCR only able to reach 63 per cent of Syrian refugees living below the SMEB in February 2026 due to constrained humanitarian funding. The security situation remains fragile in the country, amidst wider regional tensions. Despite a ceasefire in place since November 2024, repeated violations and security incidents along the Blue Line continue to affect southern Lebanon and parts of the Bekaa. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has reported ongoing exchanges of fire and other violations impacting the cessation of hostilities, underscoring the fragility of the security environment. [Diplomatic engagement and security discussions remain ongoing](#), including high-level United Nations visits in January 2026, during which the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations reaffirmed support for Lebanese authorities and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1701. [Continued incidents highlight the volatility of the operating environment and its implications for civilian protection and humanitarian access in affected areas](#).

Following the fall of the former Syrian government in December 2024, cross-border movements between Syria and Lebanon have continued in both directions. The changing dynamics of the refugee population prompted UNHCR to launch a presence verification (headcount) exercise, utilising geolocation validation software, to better understand the refugee population. As of the end of January 2026, [552,413 Syrians have been inactivated from UNHCR Lebanon's records](#) due to confirmed or presumed returns. The verification exercise will continue in 2026, strengthening UNHCR's ability to deliver accountable protection and humanitarian assistance.

Since December 2024, there are an estimated [115,006 Syrians](#) who have sought refuge in Lebanon. Post-December 2024 arrivals have primarily settled in Bekaa and Baalbek-EI Hermel, followed by Akkar and the North, with others residing in Beirut, Mount Lebanon and the South. Total numbers continue to fluctuate and reflect ongoing displacement within Lebanon, as identification remains ongoing when people move between areas, and limited returns from these groups have taken place. The situation remains complex and fluid, with multiple factors influencing cross-border movement.

UNHCR launched its Voluntary Return Programme in July 2025, establishing clear procedures and safeguards for refugees choosing to return through official crossings with [57,444 Syrians supported to return](#). While 95% of refugees self-organized their return, 5% returned with transport support from UNHCR and IOM organized return movements. Many families are opting for phased return strategies amid ongoing concerns related to housing, livelihoods, access to services and humanitarian assistance in Syria. UNHCR, in close coordination with the Government of Lebanon (GoL), continues to engage in efforts to facilitate voluntary return in a manner that upholds protection principles and supports informed decision-making by refugees.

In December 2025, the GoL introduced measures to regularize foreign workers, notably Syrians, to address possible labour shortages in sectors including agriculture and construction. UNHCR, together with ILO and IOM, is working closely with the Ministry of Labour and General Security to support Syrians' access to legal work permits. Around 650 new work permit applications and 300 renewals have been submitted.

The 2026 Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) was endorsed by the Steering Committee in December, reaffirming the collective commitment of the Government of Lebanon, the United Nations and partners to a coordinated humanitarian and stabilization response. The LRP has a dedicated Returns Chapter aligned with the Government's Returns Policy Paper, underscoring principled planning for voluntary, safe and dignified return while addressing broader protection, assistance and stabilization needs across the country.

Working with Partners

- Under the auspices of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, UNHCR continues to support the implementation of an integrated humanitarian and stabilization response framework developed in close consultation with the Government of Lebanon and partners. The [Lebanon Response Plan \(LRP\) 2026](#), endorsed in December 2025, provides a comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing the impact of multiple crises on people and institutions across Lebanon. The Plan guides the humanitarian–stabilization response and includes a dedicated Returns Chapter reaffirming support for voluntary, safe and dignified returns, while ensuring continued protection and assistance for refugees who remain in the country. Under the LRP, partners advance four strategic objectives: strengthening protection and access to basic services; delivering life-saving assistance to meet critical needs; reinforcing national systems and resilience, including rapid response capacity; and promoting Lebanon’s economic, social and environmental stability through livelihoods, social cohesion and community-level resilience interventions.
- UNHCR works closely with the Government of Lebanon and UN agencies to ensure a coordinated response, including collaboration with the WFP on multi-purpose cash assistance, partnership with IOM on organized voluntary returns, and coordination with ILO to expand access to livelihoods. UNHCR is also part of the PROSPECTS partnership, alongside IFC, ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank, to strengthen education, social protection and employment opportunities for forcibly displaced persons and host communities. Within the LRP, UNHCR leads the Protection and Shelter sectors and the Durable Solutions Working Group, co-leads the GBV sub-sector and the Cash and Information Management Working Groups, and actively participates in national and sub-national inter-sector coordination.
- In 2026, UNHCR is working with 13 partners, including four international and nine national organizations, and continues to collaborate closely with national institutions to strengthen response capacity and ensure complementarity with government efforts. However, amid severe funding constraints, the sustainability of these programmes remains at risk and will depend on urgent donor support, as further reductions would have a profound impact on vulnerable refugees and host communities in Lebanon’s fragile context.

Main Activities

Protection

- UNHCR continues to coordinate the protection response for refugees in Lebanon with the 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.
- While part of the longer-term sustainable registration strategy, the 2025 global funding constraints necessitated expediting the centralization of registration activities into one case processing centre in Beirut and the closure of reception centres in Zahle and Tripoli. Mobile teams were introduced in 2025 to ensure continued access to protection and assistance services, while the [Presence Verification Exercise will continue in 2026, enhancing UNHCR’s efforts in tracking population movements, ensuring protection, and coordinating humanitarian assistance](#).
- UNHCR supports post-December 2024 arrivals through in-kind assistance, including shelter support and basic items, based on the established geographic areas of responsibility, 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, with the [latest findings highlighting](#) persistent [financial insecurity](#), [limited legal residency](#) and [rising psychosocial distress among refugees](#).
- In coordination with the Government of Lebanon and partners, UNHCR supports voluntary returns of Syrian refugees through its facilitated Voluntary Return Programme, where UNHCR provides counselling and guidance on exit procedures through community structures, the National Call Center, the [UNHCR Help website](#) and other channels, and delivers return cash grants to eligible refugees, ensuring that all returns are voluntary, safe and dignified. As of end-January, 57,444 Syrians were supported to return, while UNHCR and IOM have also facilitated 15 organized return movements, with most refugees continuing to opt for self-organized returns.

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. Together with partners, UNHCR empowers and builds refugees' capacities through community engagement programmes and a network of 450 Outreach Volunteers (OVs).
- These activities are implemented through 21 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, the centres continue to serve as critical platforms for localized support, through centre-based and mobile activities, including skills development, psychosocial support and voluntary return awareness sessions.

Shelter and core-relief items

- UNHCR aims to ensure the protection of vulnerable populations and contribute to social stability by improving access to liveable shelters and providing support against deteriorating shelter conditions. Focus is placed on life-saving interventions in informal settlements and substandard urban areas to protect from harsh weather and prevent illnesses.
- In 2025, shelter assistance was significantly reduced due to funding constraints, which particularly affected displaced families living in substandard conditions, including post-December 2024 arrivals. Cash-for-shelter assistance and repair activities were discontinued while limited weatherproofing kits, site improvements and shelter rehabilitation were hyper-prioritized. Shelter remains a critical need in 2026 with an immediate impact on refugees' dignity during their stay in the country.
- UNHCR and partners continue to distribute core relief items such as blankets, mattresses, jerry cans, kitchen sets, and solar lamps to post-December 2024 arrivals and vulnerable individuals who have suffered a specific event such as flooding or fire.

Basic needs

- UNHCR assists vulnerable asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and refugees in meeting their most basic needs through cash assistance.
- Since 2013, UNHCR has provided monthly Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) through ATM cards, enabling families to cover some of their essential costs such as rent, food, and healthcare, while contributing to the local economy. In January, UNHCR delivered MPCA to 208,481 refugees (43,243 families).
- The MPCA coverage declined, with UNHCR only able to support 181,806 persons with MPCA in February. There was a drop of 63% from the May-Oct 2025 cycle due to severe funding cuts, reflecting the sustained

impact of underfunding. Without additional resources, families remaining in the programme face an uncertain outlook beyond the current assistance cycle ending in April 2026.

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.



And with the support of private donors

CONTACTS

Juliette Stevenson, Senior External Relations Officer, stevens@unhcr.org

Zasha Millan, Associate Reporting Officer, millan@unhcr.org

Beirut, Lebanon

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www.unhcr.org | www.unhcr.org/lb | UNHCR Lebanon

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