

# Lebanon

February 2019

**Eight years** into the Syria crisis, Lebanon remains the country hosting the **largest number of refugees** per capita. Close to **950,000** Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR, though

the Government estimate of the total Syrian displaced population remains at **1.5 million**. In addition, more than **18,000** refugees of Iraqi, Sudanese and other origins stay in Lebanon.

The presence of such a large refugee population and **pressure on infrastructure and services** are trying the patience and hospitality of the host community.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Country of origin



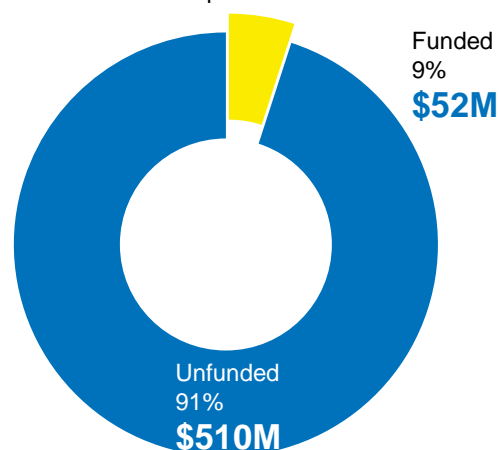
\* Registration figures as of 31 January 2019

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

## FUNDING

### USD 562 M

requested for the Lebanon operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

- 485 National Staff
- 99 International Staff

### Offices:

- 1 Branch Office in Beirut
- 2 Sub-offices in Tripoli and Zahle
- 2 Field Offices in Mount Lebanon and Tyre



## Working in Partnership

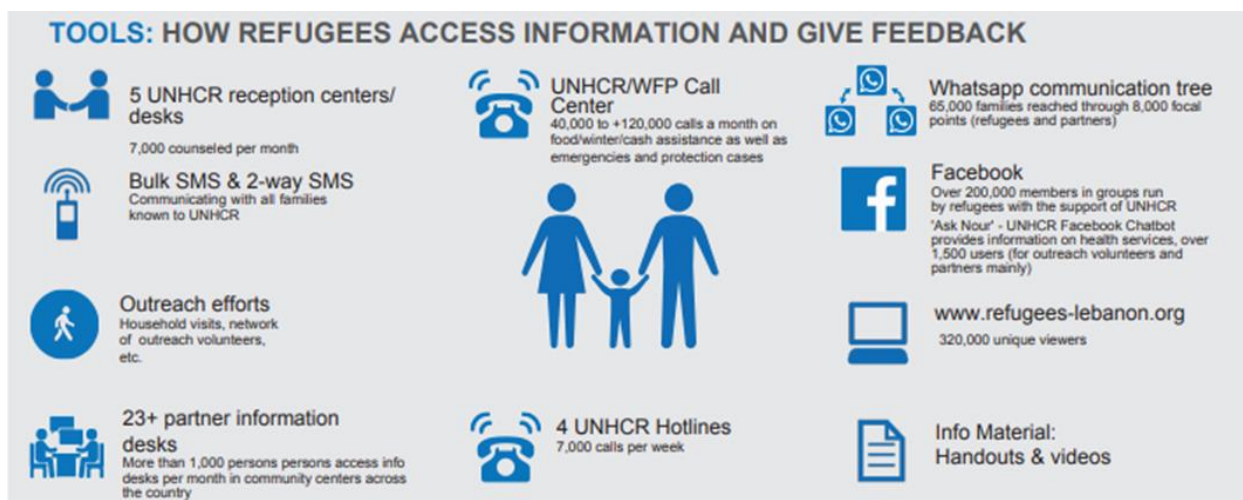
- The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) is led by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) on behalf of the Government of Lebanon, and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. UNHCR co-leads the humanitarian refugee response component of the LCRP, while UNDP co-leads the resilience component, both agencies working in close collaboration with the Government of Lebanon and humanitarian actors in doing so. UNHCR also co-leads a number of thematic sectors, namely Protection, Basic Assistance, Health, and Shelter, and provides support to other sectors, including Education, Social Stability and WASH.

## Main Activities

### Protection

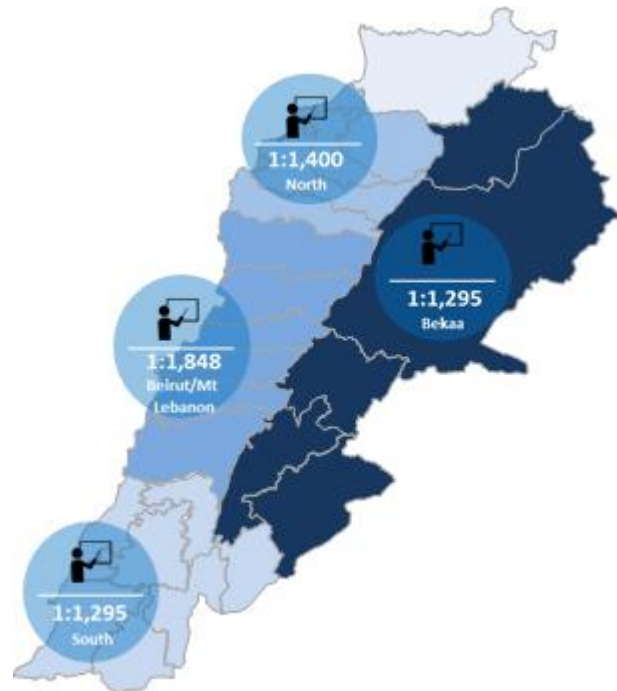
- UNHCR regularly verifies and updates the data of the Syrian refugees who registered with UNHCR before the Government's instruction in 2015 to suspend registration, and registers and determines the claims of asylum-seekers of other nationalities. This work is an essential component of UNHCR's protection work and continuous efforts to maintain accurate data on its persons of concern, to inform planning and interventions, including eligibility for assistance, responses to refugees with specific needs, and the identification of durable solutions. In 2019, UNHCR aims to verify 69% of the registered Syrian refugees and issue them with new refugee certificates, as well as housing attestations needed to renew legal residency. UNHCR will also implement continuous registration and regularly update the data of refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities.
- While access to territory remains restricted for Syrians since 2015, UNHCR conducts border monitoring and advocates for a full and inclusive application of the humanitarian admission criteria. UNHCR also intervenes to prevent *refoulement*, especially of non-Syrian refugees who are at risk if arrested and lack prospects of third country resettlement. Throughout 2019, regular visits will be conducted to prisons and places of detention to identify and assist persons of concern. A regular presence will be maintained at the main border crossing points with Syria to observe movements and identify cases for humanitarian admission and protection and assistance services.
- UNHCR promotes the adoption of policies and the development of procedures that enable all refugees to have facilitated access to temporary legal residency, and advocates for a full and even application of existing circulars targeting Syrians, and an expansion of the residency fee waiver to cover all categories of refugees. Towards this aim, UNHCR supports the Directorate General of General Security (GSO) to increase its capacity to process residency renewal requests from Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR, eligible under the residency fee waiver published by the GSO in March 2017. Equipment and software is provided to 17 GSO offices in the regions, and the working space at central level is being expanded, all to enable an efficient processing and increased security of the residency documents provided to all using the services of the GSO, including Lebanese citizens.

- UNHCR, through its partners, provides legal aid, including counselling and representation, and implements awareness sessions and campaigns to raise refugees' knowledge on how to obtain legal residency as well as civil documents to certify births, marriages, divorces and deaths that have taken place in Lebanon, and access procedures relating to family issues, domestic violence, and civil or administrative disputes. UNHCR aims to assist up to 42,800 refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons with legal aid in 2019.
- Individuals and families with specific vulnerabilities also receive tailored support to obtain marriage registration to facilitate birth registration of their children and to increase the protection of women in case of later separation, divorce or loss of their husband. To increase the capacity of the Personal Status Department (PSD) to register vital events of refugees, UNHCR is providing equipment and staffing to PSD offices around the country.
- Local and institutional capacities are supported to prevent and address SGBV and child protection related issues through community mobilization, counselling, outreach, strengthening of specialized services and promoting engagement of men and boys in SGBV prevention and response. SGBV survivors and boys and girls facing child protection concerns receive comprehensive case management services, and persons with specific needs have access to psychosocial support, emotional support and life-skills trainings. UNHCR also provides training on SGBV prevention and response as well as child protection to partners, governmental and other actors, targeting up to 1,450 participants in 2019.
- Whether through outreach efforts, focus group discussions or surveys, UNHCR seeks regular feedback from refugees on their concerns and needs, and their views on current and foreseen interventions to ensure that they respond to refugees' expectations and are effective. Each year, UNHCR and humanitarian actors consult with over 2,000 refugee women, men, girls and boys of Syrian and other origins, with diverse profiles, through a Participatory Assessment exercise. The findings inform UNHCR's assessment of the protection situation, operations plan and prioritisation of activities and implementation of its programmes. In addition, UNHCR and partners conduct around 200 community and individual meetings each month.



- UNHCR supports 79 community centres run by either the government or NGOs. These centres support refugees and Lebanese in receiving updated information about services, acquire skills through trainings, and receive psychosocial support, among others. UNHCR also mobilised over 150 community groups, many of which are linked to community centres. The groups include youth, women, older persons and LGBTI groups with both refugee and Lebanese members with 67% % participation of women and girls.
- UNHCR engages with more than 660 general and specialized outreach volunteers (OVs), including 60% females, and 17% youth, from the refugee and host communities. OVs provide practical information to refugees, raise awareness on relevant topics, visit the most vulnerable, and refer those with specific needs to UNHCR and partners for help.
- As part of efforts to increase refugee participation in the program cycle and strengthen accountability to affected populations, UNHCR has set up Community Reference Groups (CRGs) across Lebanon to advise on the design of activities and programs, including on communication methods and tools. There are five CRGs active with 47 members of whom 53% are women, 19% are youth, 9% are older persons and 4% have disabilities. By the end of 2018, there were also a total of 450 community groups established. These groups include women, men, older persons and LGBTI groups, as well as groups organized around thematic issues, such as parent groups. The groups include more than 4,500 Lebanese and refugee community members, among whom more than 70% are women and girls.

### UNHCR Lebanon's Outreach Volunteer Initiative



### Durable solutions

- As local integration in Lebanon is not an option provided by the Government, third-country resettlement remains an important protection tool for the most vulnerable, and a key durable solution. UNHCR aims to submit up to 11,500 refugees for resettlement in 2019, and continues to advocate with third countries for increased quotas.
- While UNHCR is currently not facilitating voluntary repatriation of refugees to Syria, it endeavours to be of help to refugees who confirm their decision to return so as to make their return more sustainable. This includes fast-tracking access to birth registration, school diplomas and vaccinations. Since 2017, UNHCR has been conducting regular intention surveys and group discussions to gauge refugees' intentions and understand obstacles to return in order to work towards addressing them. UNHCR is also present at every staging and departure point across the country during GSO-facilitated group return movements; during 2018, UNHCR was present during a total of 83 movements.

### Multi-purpose cash assistance

- UNHCR Lebanon has pioneered the provision of humanitarian assistance through cash and ATM cards, and implemented a multi-purpose cash assistance programme since 2013. Apart from strengthening the capacity of the benefitting families to cover their own basic needs, such as rent, food and medicines, and thus reduce their vulnerability to exploitation and harmful coping strategies, UNHCR's multi-purpose cash programme has enabled refugees to contribute to the local economy by purchasing directly from local markets and shops. In 2018, UNHCR provided unrestricted cash assistance (USD 175 per month) to some 34,600 Syrian and non-Syrian refugee families, amounting to USD 70 million in cash transfer value. An estimated 84,000 severely vulnerable Syrian refugee families and 2,100 refugee families of other nationalities are in need of UNHCR multi-purpose cash assistance in 2019, of whom UNHCR will prioritise to assist the same number of families as in 2018.
- For the 2018-2019 winter season, UNHCR is providing winter support through cash assistance to more than 890,000 refugees to help them meet additional needs and costs due to the harsh winter weather. UNHCR's winter programme also includes core relief items and shelter improvement kits.

### Education

- Through continuous registration, data collection during the annual Back to School campaign and the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR), as well as ongoing outreach, UNHCR seeks to maintain updated information on trends and individual data on the education acquired by the refugee children in Lebanon, including on children out-of-school. This data informs advocacy and interventions to bring children into formal or informal learning opportunities, and help the retention of those in schools. While enrolment of girls and boys in the mandatory school age from 6 to 14 years is 68%, it is only 23% for children aged 15 to 17. Overall, more than half of the Syrian refugee children (aged 3 to 17) are still out of school, mainly adolescents and youth, which is a major concern. The collection and updating of data also helps inform actions needed in Lebanon and in Syria to ensure a smooth transition into schools in Syria of those who decide to repatriate.
- UNHCR works at community level to identify out-of-school children and youth, and provide counselling and awareness sessions and community-based solutions for those at risk of dropping out. It has established homework groups led by community volunteers, increased parental engagement through parent community groups, and deployed volunteers inside schools.
- Specifically, UNHCR and partners have initiated and support Parent Community Groups in the refugee community, of which over 300 are currently active. Refugee parents meet on a monthly basis to plan events and discuss conditions and challenges experienced by their children in the public schools.
- Some 300 Homework Support Groups have been established countrywide for students who find difficulties in doing their homework on their own. The groups are facilitated by parents, community volunteers, or OVs specialized in education, and are carried out in community centres or in refugees' homes, with 8-15 children per group.
- UNHCR also works to improve the protective environment for refugee children in public second shift schools, by deploying Outreach Volunteers trained in education-related matters, and Education Community Liaisons (ECLs) inside the schools to help prevent violence, identify and refer children at risk of drop-out, and liaise between parents, children and school principals and teachers. More than 380 ECLs are deployed in 262 public schools.

- In order to increase access to safe and dignified learning environments for refugee and Lebanese children, and contribute to mitigating the impact of the presence of large numbers of refugees on public schools, UNHCR is rehabilitating and expanding the capacity of 16 schools around the country. These schools will be equipped to ensure access of children with disabilities.
- Some 1,700 university students are receiving full scholarships to study in Lebanese universities, as well as language support and a monthly allowance to help them with transportation and other expenses; 350 of them are part of the UNHCR/DAFI scholarship program, and are engaged in different volunteer activities within the community. In 2018, more than 60 students are travelling to third countries through different scholarships and sponsorship programs to pursue or resume their higher education, as part of complementary pathways to formal resettlement programs.

### Health

- While refugees have non-discriminatory access to public and private health facilities in Lebanon, the Lebanese health system is mostly privatized and user fees present a significant barrier. UNHCR therefore supports refugees' access to comprehensive primary health care services, including child and maternal health, sexual and reproductive health, care for non-communicable diseases and mental health services, through subsidizing health services and medication, including vaccinations, at primary health care centres, hospitals and mobile health services.
- While UNHCR is one of many actors supporting primary health care centres, the organization remains almost the sole supporter of hospital care for refugees apart from *ad hoc* services by other actors. To improve access, equity and affordability of health care services for persons of concern, UNHCR partially covers the cost of life-saving and emergency interventions. UNHCR aims to support at least 74,000 hospitalizations in 2019.

### Shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

- UNHCR works with partners within the shelter sector to respond to acute shelter needs in informal settlements and provides sustainable rehabilitation of substandard buildings within an integrated area-based approach.
- Poor urban neighbourhoods and rural areas in need of support are identified and receive targeted assistance through an integrated shelter/WASH response. Interventions include substandard shelter rehabilitation and connections to water supply and sanitation networks where possible. In 2019, around 2,700 households will be prioritized for shelter rehabilitation and access to water and sanitation and up to 58,000 refugees and host community members will benefit from storm water drainage infrastructure in flood prone areas, onsite septic tanks or connections to sewage conveyors, and desludging.
- UNHCR also conducts technical assessments to identify substandard shelters for rehabilitation and ensure their upgrade to adequate standards in exchange for written 12 months occupancy agreements with landlords. Residents of informal settlements who were affected by floods or fires are provided with shelter kits and assistance to rebuild their shelters.
- Through UNHCR's and partners' tailored interventions in informal settlements, refugees benefit from desludging services to prevent public health risks; access to safe water through quality-monitored water

trucking or through connection to water sources; and sensitization on hygiene practices adapted to the displacement conditions.

### Support to host communities

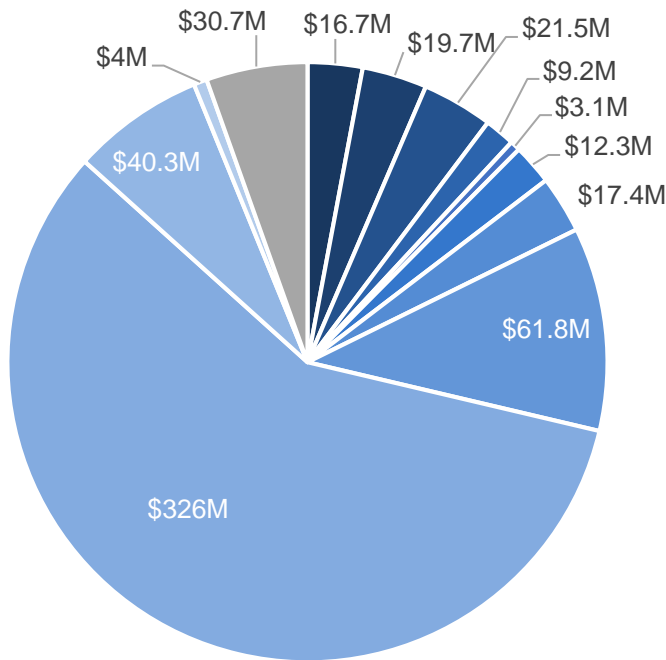
- UNHCR is continuously working to reduce the strain on Lebanese host communities and institutions, and increase their capacity to respond to the needs of the large refugee population, through support to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Energy and Water, and the Ministry of State for Displaced Affairs. This support includes equipment, training, supplies, and operational staffing costs.
- UNHCR also implements community-support projects to promote peaceful coexistence amongst Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities, as well as sectoral interventions targeting host communities (e.g. public infrastructure). This includes the provision of items and infrastructure (e.g. garbage trucks for solid waste management, upgrading water systems, construction of water reservoirs and distribution systems, garbage sorting and recycling), which benefit Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities alike, and reduce strains on public services that can otherwise lead to inter-community tensions. In 2019, UNHCR aims to support nine municipalities, benefiting 102,000 refugees and host community members, to establish sorting at source and/or composting facilities.
- Within the social stability sector, UNHCR works closely with UNDP and other partners in development and resilience, and implements community-based activities such as youth groups, which promote social stability and peaceful co-existence.

### Preventing and eradicating statelessness

In line with UNHCR's Global Campaign to bring an end to statelessness by 2024, UNHCR Lebanon's multi-year strategy aims at supporting strategic partnerships to better identify stateless populations, and those at risk of statelessness, and provide the support needed to prevent and reduce statelessness in Lebanon. Specifically, in 2019, UNHCR will:

- Support legal aid programmes implemented by grass-root organizations that promote access to documentation and legal remedies for stateless persons, within the existing legal framework
- Advocate, sensitize and build the capacity of decision-makers, government, civil society, stateless persons and the public opinion to promote legal reform, the removal of gender-discriminatory provisions in the nationality, and their inclusion into national and humanitarian assistance programs and plans.
- Provide technical support to the Working Group on Statelessness, which brings together representatives of various Ministries, UN agencies and the NGO Ruwad Houkuk, to promote pragmatic solutions to address statelessness and the protection of stateless persons. UNHCR will also continue working closely with UNICEF, in the context of the joint Global Coalition on Every Child's Right to a Nationality, to promote joint advocacy initiatives to prevent and reduce childhood statelessness.

## 2019 financial requirements



- Security from violence and exploitation
- Community empowerment and self-reliance
- Favourable protection environment
- Fair protection processes and documentation
- Durable solutions
- Services for persons with specific needs
- Education
- Health
- Basic needs
- Shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene
- Leadership, coordination and partnerships
- Logistics and operations support

### Thank you to UNHCR Lebanon's donors in 2018 and 2019 to date



### Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked and other softly earmarked funds in 2018

Denmark | Finland | France | Germany | Italy | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland | United Kingdom | United States of America | Private donors

## LINKS

UNHCR Lebanon website ([www.unhcr.org/lb](http://www.unhcr.org/lb)) | UNHCR Lebanon Facebook ([www.facebook.com/UNHCRLebanon](https://www.facebook.com/UNHCRLebanon)) | UNHCR Lebanon Twitter ([twitter.com/UNHCRLebanon](https://twitter.com/UNHCRLebanon))