



**Inter-Agency
Coordination**
Lebanon



MARCH UPDATE

- **News from March**
- **Syrian refugees face tough odds in quest for higher education**
- **Jankidar's story**

Photo: ©UNHCR/ Diego Ibarra Sánchez

Jankidar, a 31 year old Syrian refugee university student, helps other students as part of the scholarship programme at the offices of the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI).

FUNDING

Agencies and the Government of Lebanon have requested US\$ 2.75 billion in the 2017 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP).

REGISTERED SYRIAN REFUGEES

A total of 1,011,366 individuals are currently registered with UNHCR in Lebanon

MARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Sustained funding: sustained food security, sustained stability

The World Food Programme (WFP)'s latest Food Security Outcome Monitoring Report showed that 64 percent of the 656,651 Syrian refugees who received US\$ 27 in January from WFP to buy food had acceptable food consumption levels. Among those not assisted, the figure was 46 percent. Food consumption among recipients significantly improved during 2016 when steady funding translated into reliable regular food assistance. It also remained stable in the first quarter of 2017.

Alongside improved food security levels over recent months, households demonstrated their resilience through significantly reduced reliance on food-related coping strategies such as borrowing money, buying food on credit and reducing health expenditure to afford food.

It is only because of significant donations in 2016 that such positive trends have materialized. Sustained, reliable funding can be translated into sustained food security, stability and hope for households living in uncertainty.

The full Food Security Outcome Monitoring Report can be found on <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/lebanon>.

The Syrian War enters its 7th Year

In Syria, 13.5 million need humanitarian aid; 6.3 million are displaced internally; hundreds of thousands have made perilous sea voyages seeking sanctuary; nearly 3 million Syrians under five have grown up knowing nothing but conflict; and 5 million – the majority women and children – are refugees in neighbouring states, placing host communities under huge strain as they shoulder the social, economic and political fallout.

As vulnerabilities increase over time, funding is, unfortunately, lagging behind needs. A conference in Brussels in early April will assess the country's future, including humanitarian funding requirements. The UN is requesting US\$ 8 billion this year to meet Syrians' needs at home and in exile. This follows important commitments made at the 2016 London Conference, especially on education and livelihoods, and it is essential that these efforts are sustained.

Voices from Syria: Palestine refugees from Syria seven years into the crisis

Over 60 per cent of the 450,000 Palestine refugees inside Syria are displaced, with over 28,900 trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas like Yarmouk and Daraa. The Syrian crisis has affected three generations of Palestine refugees; the first generation originally fled from northern Palestine in 1948, others came from the Golan Heights in 1967 and lastly those who fled the civil war in Lebanon in 1982.

64 percent of the 656,651 Syrian refugees who received US\$ 27 in January from WFP to buy food had acceptable food consumption levels

In Syria, 13.5 million need humanitarian aid and 6.3 million are displaced internally

Nearly 3 million Syrian children under five have grown up knowing nothing but conflict

Lebanon is currently home to some 32,000 Palestine refugees from Syria who receive vital assistance from UNRWA, in the form of cash assistance for their basic needs, and access to UNRWA's education and health services with the generous support of international donors to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017.

To commemorate the resilience of Palestine refugees in Syria through six years of conflict, the Agency launched an advocacy campaign entitled "Voices from Syria".

Through sharing stories of six Palestine refugees and a song entitled "Dreaming of the Future" - composed and performed by UNRWA teacher and students - the campaign contrasts the hardships Palestine refugees have faced since 1948 with powerful narrative of survival and resilience.

Go to <http://www.unrwa.org/voicesfromSyria> to listen to the song and the voices of six refugees spanning three generations.

Syrian children face growing mental health crisis, new Save the Children report reveals

A report by Save the Children revealed a mental health crisis among children trapped in Syria, as the war entered its seventh year.

More than 450 children, adolescents and adults were interviewed across seven governorates in Syria for "[Invisible Wounds](#)", the largest study of its kind conducted during the course of the conflict. It found that many children are living in an almost constant state of fear, terrified by shelling, airstrikes and ongoing violence, with devastating psychological consequences.

Mental health experts consulted for this report said it showed children are suffering from a condition called 'toxic stress', which can occur when children experience strong, frequent or prolonged adversity such as the extreme violence occurring in the Syria conflict. Continuous toxic stress response can have a life-long impact on children's mental and physical health.

Findings show 84 per cent of adults and nearly all children believe ongoing bombing and shelling is the number one cause of psychological stress in children's daily lives. Over 50 per cent of children say they never or rarely feel safe at school and 40 per cent say they don't feel safe to play outside, even right outside their own home.

Some 89 per cent of adults said children's behaviour has become more fearful and nervous as the war goes on, while over 70 per cent said that children increasingly suffer from frequent bedwetting and involuntary urination.

Experts say we are reaching a crisis point; if the war does not end soon and children don't receive the psychological support they need, it will be much harder to repair the damage when they reach adulthood.

Over 60 per cent of the 450,000 Palestine refugees inside Syria are displaced, with over 28,900 trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas

Some 89 per cent of adults said children's behaviour has become more fearful and nervous as the war goes on

Non-formal education is key in strengthening social stability

Six-year-old Syrian and Lebanese children tell their stories

On the eve of the sixth anniversary of the Syria Crisis, Save the Children interviewed three six-year-old children from Syria and Lebanon who face challenges imposed by six years of conflict in Syria and security incidents in Northern Lebanon.

Fouad, Roaa and Firas are three children struggling with the ramification of similar crises. Born in times of war, they have an uncertain future as their families fight for their education and wellbeing. The children have paid a hefty price in the conflicts, suffering from the loss of a parent or living with physical injury sustained during the war.

Visit the following page to watch their stories: https://youtu.be/dbE_3Co6UEw.

Education for Social Stability

An education conference entitled 'Education for Social stability: Drawing on research and practice to inform cross-sector response', organized by International Alert on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the crisis, found that non-formal education is key in strengthening social stability and encourages stronger coordination between formal and non-formal education providers.

These timely findings were welcomed, as the education sector moves from providing emergency education towards short to medium-term solutions for Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

The conference was held in partnership with Roskilde University in Denmark and over 40 representatives from the Lebanese government, civil society, UN agencies and academics, to discuss the role of education in improving social stability in Lebanon.

SYRIAN REFUGEES FACE TOUGH ODDS IN QUEST FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

The DAFI programme offers scholarships for refugee student to study at the university level

In Lebanon, the programme has allowed 315 refugee students to study in Lebanese universities in 2017, an increase from 58 in 2014

Only one-in-eight of refugee youths manage to enrol in further education

Valid temporary residency permits are among the list of requirements for university enrolment

The Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative, UNHCR's tertiary education scholarship programme, known as DAFI, offers scholarships for refugee student to study at the university level.

Since its inception in 1992, the DAFI programme has grown considerably, enabling over 2,240 refugee students annually to study at universities and colleges in 41 countries of asylum. In Lebanon, the programme has allowed 315 refugee students to study in Lebanese universities in 2017, an increase from 58 in 2014.

But for most young refugees, the hurdles to accessing higher education remain formidable. Only one-in-eight of refugee youths manage to enrol in further education.

Over a third of DAFI beneficiaries have said that they do not have time to study due to pressure at home to work and support their families, according to a 2016 assessment.

In addition, the lack of administrative documents, including education certificates from prior studies, is one of the many hurdles facing Syrian youths who wish to enrol in university.

Valid temporary residency permits are among the list of requirements for university enrolment. While the universities now issue a document upon registration to help students obtain temporary residency, the majority of refugees in Lebanon were unable to pay the yearly renewal fee of US\$ 200.

The Government of Lebanon last month announced that Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR can now renew their residency permits free of charge – a change warmly welcomed by refugees as well as the humanitarian community, which has long advocated for the waiver of renewal fees.

It is important that this measure is applied to refugee students so that they can complete their studies and contribute their expertise to the rebuilding of the country when conditions allow for them to return.

JANKIDAR'S STORY



Jankidar, a 31 years old Syrian student, talks with his friends inside the campus of the Lebanese University in Lebanon. © UNHCR/ Diego Ibarra Sánchez

As a high school student in Syria, Jankidar knew that he wanted to study political sciences. But soon after enrolling in Aleppo University, he had to drop out to support his family.

Then when war broke out in Syria in 2011, he was forced to flee his hometown of Kobane for Lebanon, where he tried once again to get a university degree - this time juggling four temporary jobs to pay for his tuition and make ends meet. "I worked in elevator maintenance, as a porter, and painter, and as an extra on Lebanese and Syrian films and TV shows," he recalls.

The 31-year-old's struggle to get a college degree is all-too-common among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, only one-in-eight of whom manage to enroll in further education.

Then in 2015, he learned about UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency's [higher education scholarship programme](#), known as DAFI and funded by Germany. He applied, and soon after overcame the long odds to win a full scholarship to study for a Master's in Political and Administrative Sciences at Lebanese University.

Read the full story [here](#).

DONORS

Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America. Contributions have also been received from the Emergency Response Fund (ERF), UN Action against Violence in Conflict and from private donors.

AGENCIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS UPDATE

International Alert, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNRWA, WFP.

This report is compiled by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) based on information provided by agencies working on the Syrian refugee response in Lebanon.

For more information, please contact Dana Sleiman at sleiman@unhcr.org or Lisa Abou Khaled at aboukhal@unhcr.org