



GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

LEBANON'S GOOD PRACTICES



With the unanimous adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants by all 193 Member States of the United Nations on 19 September 2016, the international community reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the response to large movements of refugees and migrants.

The Declaration set out a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and outlined steps towards the achievement of a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) with specific actions needed to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugees' dignity in exile, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for voluntary return in safety and dignity.

With this in mind, the New York Declaration called upon UNHCR to initiate the application of the CRRF and to develop a Global Compact on Refugees by December 2018, in close coordination with relevant States, other UN agencies, experts, civil society and refugees – using a “whole of society approach.”

The Global Compact on Refugees - affirmed by the United Nations General

Assembly on 17 December 2018 - is about demonstrating that a large refugee movement is not a matter that only concerns the affected refugees, host countries and humanitarian actors. Everyone across the world and within each country can and should contribute to the response. The Global Compact is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation.

One year after the historic affirmation of the Global Compact on Refugees, the first Global Refugee Forum, taking place on 17 and 18 December 2019, is a critical opportunity to build momentum towards achieving the objectives of this new commitment and strengthen the collective response to refugee situations.



The Forum will focus on the following areas: **arrangements for burden and responsibility-sharing, education, jobs and livelihoods, energy and infrastructure, solutions, and protection capacity.**

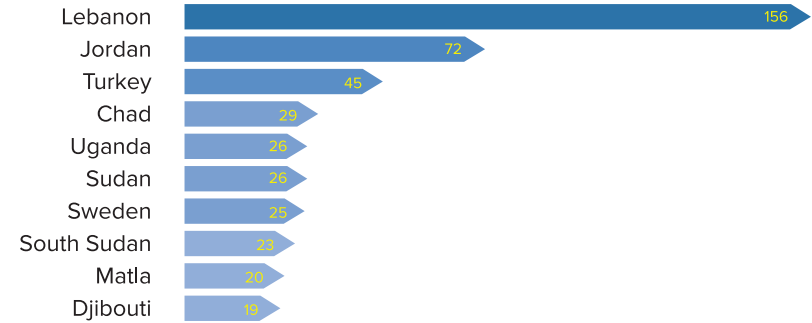
As of today, Lebanon remains the country in the world hosting the largest number of refugees per capita. The Lebanese Government estimates that the country hosts 1.5 million Syrian refugees who have fled the conflict in Syria – including, as of November 2019, 916,113 registered with

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. There are also 27,700 Palestinian refugees from Syria who came to Lebanon during the crisis, adding to a pre-existing population of an estimated 180,000 Palestinian refugees, under UNRWA's mandate.



Lebanon Has The Most Refugees Per 1,000 People

Number of Refugees per 1,000 inhabitants at the end of 2018



This document highlights some of the unprecedented efforts and practices developed in Lebanon during the response to the influx of a massive number of Syrians fleeing the conflict, which have inspired some of the development of the CRRF and Global Compact and can help inform future responses elsewhere.




LEBANON'S RESPONSE TO THE MASS INFLUX

Since the inception of the mass influx generated by the Syrian crisis, the authorities and the people of Lebanon have shown remarkable solidarity, and repeatedly affirmed commitments to key protection principles and standards. The presence of refugees has had a substantial impact on the country. This is further put to test at a time when Lebanon is affected by a severe economic crisis.

From the start of the crisis in 2011, and throughout the peak of displacement in 2013 and 2014 when thousands of people were fleeing to Lebanon every day in search of international protection, Lebanon saved lives by allowing them access to the territory, immediate registration, documentation and basic

services. Such responsiveness to the large-scale movement of Syrians in need of protection was not necessarily similar in other parts of the world, which triggered the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants 2016 where the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the CRRF were adopted.

By opening their homes and sharing the resources in their community with the Syrian refugees, the Lebanese peoples' humanitarianism has inspired others across the world and the "whole of society approach", which is at the heart of the Global Compact. Even beyond Lebanon, individuals and families have reached out to sponsor medical care or third country resettlement for particularly vulnerable Syrian refugees in Lebanon.



“We believe that a comprehensive refugee response should be developed and initiated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in close coordination with relevant States, including host countries, and involving other relevant United Nations entities, for each situation involving large movements of refugees. This should involve a multi-stakeholder approach that includes national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, civil society partners (including faith-based organizations, diaspora organizations and academia), the private sector, the media and refugees themselves.”

**New York Declaration
for Refugees and Migrants**



AN INNOVATIVE COORDINATION MODEL

In order to effectively respond from the start to both humanitarian and development needs, an integrated approach was developed through the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), mirroring the wider regional response. The Lebanese Government has played a **central role** in coordinating sectors of intervention, in collaboration with the United Nations.

The LCRP is a **multi-year plan** which brings together more than 180 partners, including ministries, UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations, to provide protection and deliver **basic services and immediate relief assistance** to 2.8 million people including Syrian refugees, vulnerable Lebanese and Palestinian refugees, as well as invest in Lebanon's infrastructure, economy and public institutions.

UNPRECEDENTED INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

A number of solidarity conferences and pledging conferences have been held over the years as ways to generate support for the LCRP, such as the Kuwait and London conferences in 2016, and the Brussels I, II and III Conferences, since 2017.

Inspired by these, the Global Compact on Refugees makes explicit reference to situation-specific solidarity conferences as one initiative that can provide a strategic vehicle to garner broad-based support for host States or countries of origin.



MUNICIPALITIES AT THE FRONTLINE

In Lebanon, where the Syrian refugees have lived dispersed across the country - the majority in private accommodation and a smaller number in informal tented settlements - municipalities have truly been at the forefront in making the local infrastructure and services available to the Syrian refugees.

The increased pressure on these resources have led to a critical need for support to the municipal services and institutions, and to the affected Lebanese communities, in order to mitigate the impact and contribute to the longer-term development of

municipal services. Since 2011, UNHCR has allocated USD 226.8 million in institutional and community support projects including support to ministries, municipalities, the sectors of education, livelihoods, infrastructure, waste management and water, to name some.

In 2018 alone, more than USD 240 million was channeled by the LCRP partners to strengthen service delivery, policy development, capacity building and institutional stability in the public sector, and USD 26 million was invested in support of municipalities and unions to respond to prevailing pressure on services.





“The achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of a humanitarian character is a core purpose of the United Nations, as set out in its Charter, and is in line with the principle of sovereign equality of States... The Global Compact on Refugees intends to provide a basis for predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing among all United Nations Member States, together with other relevant stakeholders as appropriate...”

Global Compact on Refugees



SIMPLIFYING ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTATION

One of the first expressions of a good practice has been the Lebanese Government's continuous public reaffirmation of its commitment to the principle of non-refoulement.

Simplified Civil Registration:

Since the beginning of the crisis, and as of October 2019, some 188,000 children were born in Lebanon to Syrian refugee parents registered with UNHCR.

Recognizing the right of every child to be registered at birth, and in order to demonstrate Syrian parentage, prevent statelessness, act as proof of age and prevent any risks, the Lebanese Government initiated a series of policy

developments to facilitate both birth and marriage registration for refugee children and parents.

Thanks to the leadership of the Lebanese Government, with the active mobilization of the Ministry of Displaced Affairs, significant progress was made in the past three years. The registration rate at the Foreigners' Registry level continues to show a positive development, increasing to 30 per cent of births of children born in Lebanon registered in 2019, compared with 21 per cent in 2018 and 17 per cent in 2017. An exponential increase is expected in 2020 in bridging the gap of unregistered children in Lebanon.

SEPT
2017

Personal Status Department (PSD), simplifies birth and marriage registration. Residency of parents no longer required to register a newborn. Only one spouse needs valid legal residency to register a marriage.

FEB
2018

Minister of Interior and Municipalities is granted authority to facilitate birth registration for Syrian refugee children born in Lebanon after 2011.



MAR
2018

PSD allows parents of refugee children born in Lebanon between 1 January 2011 and 8 February 2018, to register their births for free and without complex judicial procedures, benefiting over 50,000 children.

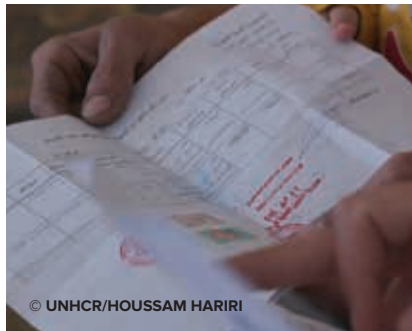
AUG
2019

One-year waiver extended to include all Syrian children born in Lebanon since 2011 (including those born after 8 February 2018).

Improved Access to Residency:

In recognition that persons displaced by conflict are often not in a position to provide the required documents or cover the fees that are normally required from foreigners to access temporary residency, the Lebanese Government, through its Directorate General of General Security (GSO), has endeavored over the years to

facilitate the residency renewal process for Syrian refugees. This included removing a number of the document requirements and waiving the fee for large numbers of Syrians registered with UNHCR. Having residency permits allows people to move freely, to access the judicial system and helps prevent exploitation and abuse. It also allows them to register their marriages, and consequently the birth of children.



JUN
2016

The required notarized pledge not to work was replaced by a pledge to abide by Lebanese laws, signed free of charge at GSO centers during the residency renewal process.

SEP
2016

The GSO accepted to replace the Housing Commitment with landlords by a housing attestation issued by UNHCR free of charge.

MAR
2017

The Lebanese Government announced a waiver of residency renewal and overstay fees for certain categories of Syrians.

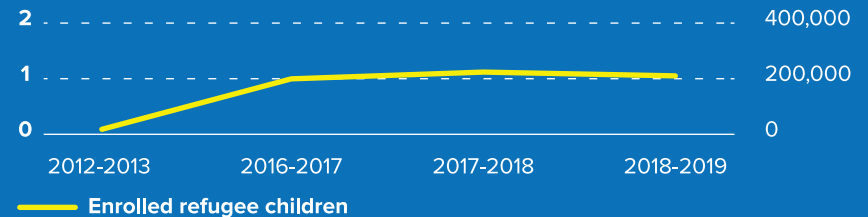
APR
2018

The GSO issued a decision to simplify documentary requirements for Syrians who have turned 15 years, while in Lebanon reducing risks related to lack of residency that this group of young refugees was facing.

JUL
2019

In order to scale-up the number of refugees with legal residency, GSO agreed to receive group-referrals by UNHCR.

Number of enrolled refugee children in formal public schools





GIVING CHILDREN A FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION

The Lebanese public school system, under the direction of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), has always welcomed non-Lebanese children, enabling them to pursue an accredited education. For its part, the donor community provided financial resources to mitigate the extra cost that this represented on the State. In January 2014, MEHE started an afternoon shift specially dedicated to refugee children in order to accommodate the increasing demand on public schools.

MEHE took formal lead of the Education Emergency response with the “Reaching All Children with Education (RACE)” Plan (2014-2016) that was developed with the support of the international community. This was followed by RACE II (2017-2021), envisaging a more strategic approach to the education response, including child protection, quality education, inclusion and youth opportunities through vocational training and life skills. Implementation of the Plan was supported by active nationwide Back to School campaigns to mobilize vulnerable communities and bring as many school age children and youth as possible back to a formal schooling system.

Accordingly, the number of non-Lebanese students increased from 30,000 in the academic year 2012-2013 to more than 210,000 in 2018-2019. Furthermore, programs to eradicate illiteracy were tailored for young students (15-24 years). Other pre-educational programs are also implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and local and international NGOs.

Recognizing the right to education for all children, regardless of nationality or legal status, the MEHE has waived residency permits for refugees as a requirement to enroll in primary, secondary and tertiary education, to be allowed to sit for official exams and to retrieve official certificates for successfully accomplished exams. This has contributed to increased access to education for refugee children and youth.



REGULATING HEALTH CARE COSTS

Health care is a fundamental requirement, yet is highly privatized in Lebanon. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) worked to ensure that the Syrian refugees were able to receive the medical care they needed. Since the beginning of the influx of refugees to Lebanon, the Ministry, with support from international partners, ensured that all individuals and families in the community were able to **access** medical consultations, lab tests and essential medicines at **affordable costs** through a network of dispensaries around the country. In addition, and since 2013, MoPH supported provision of vaccination at UNHCR reception centers, and made it available free of charge for children across the MoPH network of primary health care

centers. In terms of hospital care, Syrian refugees are admitted into private and public hospitals at rates determined by the MoPH. Costs for life saving and emergency interventions are to a large extent subsidized by UNHCR.

The MoPH issued several bidding Memorandums to all primary health care networks requesting not to differentiate between Lebanese and non-Lebanese patients regarding the provision of services and collection of fees. The Ministry also led central coordination and regular meetings with all health partners throughout the response.

SHELTER

In line with Government policy, no formal refugee camps were established in Lebanon in response to the influx of Syrian refugees. This policy has had a positive impact on the way international aid has been channeled to both hosting and

refugee communities, benefiting some of the most vulnerable Lebanese and ensuring that humanitarian interventions are linked with national and municipal development plans in the long term.



SOCIAL SUPPORT TO PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

The Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) is the main Government entity responsible for the provision of social services. It is in charge of child protection, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response, family support services, services to persons with disabilities, and for the provision of social services to disadvantaged families, including Syrian refugees in Lebanon, through its network of some 220 Social Development Centres (SDCs) across the country.

SDCs are open to Lebanese and non-Lebanese alike, including refugees of all nationalities. Their activities include basic literacy and numeracy classes, vocational training, protection information, awareness raising and day care services.

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has also placed special attention on women and children at risk, notably with regards to finding alternatives to detention of, and solutions for children “in conflict with the law”.

“In line with national health care laws, policies and plans, and in support of host countries, States and relevant stakeholders will contribute resources and expertise to expand and enhance the quality of national health systems to facilitate access by refugees and host communities, including women and girls; children, adolescents and youth; older persons; those with chronic illnesses, including tuberculosis and HIV; survivors of trafficking in persons, torture, trauma or violence, including sexual and gender-based violence; and persons with disabilities.”

Global Compact on Refugees





“One of the primary objectives of the global compact is to facilitate access to durable solutions, including planning for solutions from the outset of refugee situations. Eliminating root causes is the most effective way to achieve solutions. In line with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, political and security cooperation, diplomacy, development and the promotion and protection of human rights are key to resolving protracted refugee situations and preventing new crises from emerging.”

Global Compact on Refugees



TOWARDS AN END TO DISPLACEMENT: REALIZATION OF SOLUTIONS

Resettlement to a New Country:

Every year, with the help of UNHCR and partners, thousands of refugees, among the most vulnerable, **leave for resettlement** to countries in North and South America, Europe and Australia. In recent years, a number of countries have joined this effort, including through **creative complementary options** such as scholarships, temporary humanitarian visas, and family reunification programs. From 2011 until the end of September 2019, more than 95,000 refugees (including 82,530 Syrians) have been submitted by UNHCR to over 22 different resettlement countries, of whom more than 68,000 (including 57,695 Syrians) have departed Lebanon.


Returning Home:

Individual returns of refugees from Lebanon to Syria started to take place, particularly since 2017. Group returns are also facilitated by the GSO for thousands of individuals and families, in the presence of UNHCR. While still limited, the number of returns is increasing steadily. Since 2017, over 80 per cent of the Syrian refugee community in Lebanon have consistently indicated their intention to return to their country ultimately.

Various Ministries, in consultation with UNHCR, have committed to **securing essential documentation** for those opting to return, such as civil documents and school certificates. The Ministry of Public Health delivers **vaccinations** and **advance chronic medication** for those who need it. While providing specific support to refugees returning now, UNHCR continues to work with all those concerned, including the country of origin, host countries and refugees towards **addressing the factors that are currently limiting larger-scale organized returns**.

Preventing and Resolving Conflicts:

Adopted through resolution A/RES/73/344 of the United Nations General Assembly on 16 September 2019, Lebanon's innovative initiative to establish an International Academy for Human Encounters and Dialogue in Lebanon can contribute substantially to building bridges and **fostering peaceful coexistence** within and between communities around the world. Through mediation and preventive diplomacy, the International Academy will contribute towards avoiding and resolving conflicts, main cause of displacement in today's world.



“... The Government of Lebanon and its international partners reiterate that the main durable solution for Syrian refugees in Lebanon is their safe, dignified and non-coercive return to their country of origin, in accordance with international law and the principle of non-refoulement.”

**Brussels II Conference,
Lebanon partnership paper**



“We are determined to address the root causes of large movements of refugees and migrants, including through increased efforts aimed at early prevention of crisis situations based on preventive diplomacy. We will address them also through prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict, greater coordination of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts, the promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels and the protection of human rights.”

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants





UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

