

Lebanon

June 2020

Operational context

Nine years into the Syria crisis, Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees per capita in the world, with the Government estimating that **1.5 million** Syrian refugees are present in the country. Lebanon also hosts more than **18,000** refugees of Iraqi, Sudanese and other origins, and more than 200,000 Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate. The presence of such a large refugee population in a small country facing a deepening **economic crisis**, high unemployment, pressure on infrastructure, and environmental challenges increasingly risks affecting inter-community relations and social stability.

COVID-19

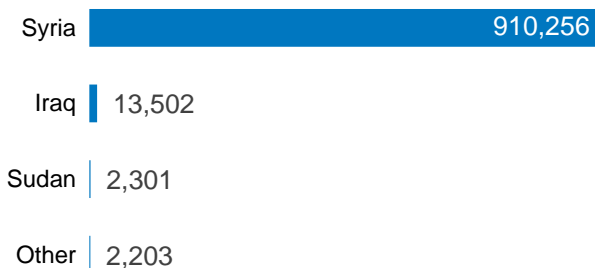
The onset of the global COVID-19 crisis resulted in various confinement measures introduced by Government of Lebanon (GoL) designed to stop the spread of the virus. While the restrictions imposed have affected the implementation of some programmes, UNHCR has adapted its way of delivering many of the protection services to respond to the needs of refugees. As an example, individual case management is being conducted by phone wherever possible and in-person counselling is ongoing for exceptional cases. UNHCR has also expanded its availability through the call centres and hotlines to respond to increased protection, assistance and other queries. Key assistance programmes including cash-based interventions and health are ongoing.

UNHCR is working within the framework of the Government's response to the COVID-19 emergency, and in close collaboration with WHO and other partners, to ensure that refugees' needs are addressed in a coordinated, equal and coherent manner. UNHCR's contribution to the refugee component of the response falls within three main areas: community engagement and prevention; enabling quarantining/isolation of refugees living in overcrowded settings; and reinforcing testing and hospitalisation capacity.

For details of UNHCR Lebanon's response to COVID-19 and ongoing socio-economic crisis, as well as impact on regular programmes, please see [UNHCR Lebanon's COVID-19 Operational Updates](#).

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin (registered refugees)



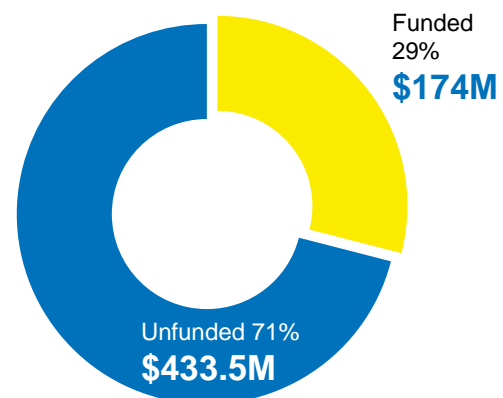
* Registration figures as of 31 January 2020

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

FUNDING

USD 607.5 M

requested for the Lebanon operation



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

560 National Staff/115 International Staff

Offices:

1 Country 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 and development 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

Advocacy aimed at preserving the protection and dignity of refugees while they remain in temporary exile in Lebanon is at the core of UNHCR's work. In an increasingly restrictive protection environment, where multiple measures are being taken to restrict (re-)entry of Syrians to the territory, the use of hard structures in shelters to protect against the elements, and access to livelihoods, advocacy grounded in international standards and the rule of law remains a central component of UNHCR's protection and solutions work.

UNHCR regularly verifies and updates the data of 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. Accurate data is needed to inform planning and interventions, including eligibility for assistance, responses to refugees with specific needs, and the identification of durable solutions. In 2019, UNHCR fully verified 72% of registered Syrian refugees, while updating key changes in, for example, family composition, specific needs and contact numbers of additional case files, and regularly update the data of refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities.

Access to territory has remained restricted for Syrians since 2015, and become increasingly difficult since the Higher Defence Council and the Directorate General of General Security (GSO) adopted new decisions in this regard in April 2019. UNHCR conducts border monitoring and advocates for a full and inclusive application of the narrow humanitarian admission criteria. UNHCR also intervenes to prevent refoulement, and makes regular visits to prisons and places of detention to identify and assist persons of concern.

UNHCR advocates for policies and procedures that enable all refugees access to temporary legal residency, including through a full and even application of existing circulars targeting Syrians, and for the expansion of the residency fee waiver (issued in March 2017) to cover all categories of refugees. UNHCR supports the GSO to increase its capacity to process residency renewal requests from registered Syrian refugees, as well as to provide services to Lebanese citizens.

UNHCR provides legal aid, including counselling and representation, and implements awareness sessions and campaigns to raise refugees' knowledge on how to obtain legal residency, 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. In 2020 UNHCR aims to assist up to 44,000 refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons with legal aid.

Individuals and families with specific needs also receive tailored support to obtain marriage registration, which will facilitate birth registration of their children and increase the protection of women in case of later

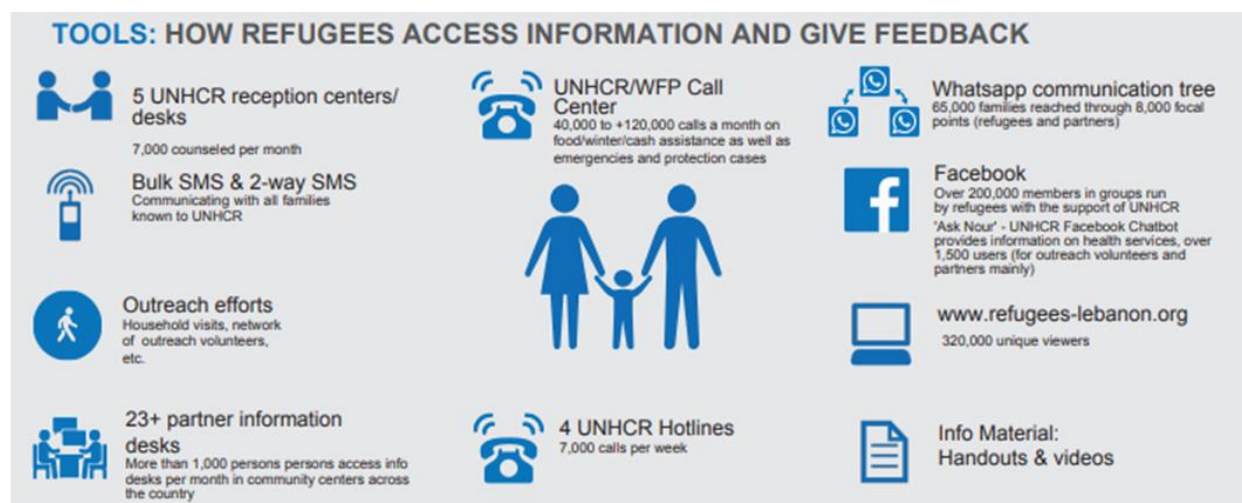
separation, divorce or loss of their husband. To this end, UNHCR is providing equipment and staffing to increase the capacity of the Personal Status Department within the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities.

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 the engagement of men and boys in SGBV prevention and response. 79 community centres run by either the national authorities or NGOs are supported by UNHCR. These centres support refugees and Lebanese in receiving updated information about services, acquire skills through trainings, and receive psychosocial support, among others.

Consulting and engaging refugees

Whether through daily outreach activities, targeted focus group discussions or surveys, UNHCR seeks regular feedback from refugees on their concerns, needs and capacities, and their views on current and foreseen interventions to ensure that they respond to refugees' expectations and are effective.

Each year, UNHCR and key partners consult with more than 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 and analyses of the protection situation, design of the country 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.



Community mobilization and Outreach Volunteer initiative

153 community groups have been mobilised around the country, 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 other response partners for help.

Community Reference Groups (CRGs) have been set up across Lebanon to advise on the design of activities and programs. Currently, there are five CRGs active with 47 members of whom 53% are women, 19% are youth, 9% are older persons and 4% have disabilities.

Durable solutions

UNHCR works towards securing durable solutions outside Lebanon for persons of concern as local integration is not an option provided by the Government. In 2020, UNHCR aims to submit up to 8,000 Syrian refugees and 900 refugees of other nationalities for third country resettlement.

UNHCR has determined that more than 10% of the registered refugee population in Lebanon will be in need of resettlement or humanitarian admission in 2020, vastly outnumbering the resettlement places likely to be available. UNHCR will therefore continue to advocate for states to increase the number of resettlement places available to refugees in Lebanon.

While UNHCR is currently not organising voluntary repatriation of refugees to Syria, support is provided to refugees who wish to return, through the provision of information the importance of having identity and civil status documents in order prior to return, and the availability of community centres and services in Syria. In coordination with relevant actors, refugee children returning are also provided with school diplomas and vaccinations. UNHCR and our partners are also present at every staging and departure point across the country during GSO-facilitated group return movements. Since 2017, UNHCR has conducted regular surveys to gauge refugees' intentions and perceptions in relation to return, in order to inform advocacy and other interventions aimed at creating enabling conditions for safe, dignified and sustainable return. On average, 86% of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon express a longing to repatriate to their home country

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 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 2019, 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, and planned to assist the same number in 2020.

In 2020, UNHCR has expanded its cash assistance programmes in response to the ongoing socio-economic crisis. In June 2020 a total of **62,800** families are being assisted. In addition to regular MCAP recipients, this includes:

- An additional 11,500 vulnerable families who are receiving temporary cash assistance as part of the COVID-19 response for three months, from May – July; and
- Including an additional 16,800 families in the multipurpose cash assistance programme from June 2020 onwards using funds made possible through the use of a humanitarian exchange rate.

Winter assistance

For the 2019-2020 winter season, UNHCR provided winter support through cash assistance to close to 870,000 refugees and some 20,000 vulnerable Lebanese 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. In light of the major economic crisis currently affecting Lebanon, UNHCR's winter assistance reached more vulnerable Lebanese families than in previous years.

Education

Given the importance of accurate data for planning and the design of effective programs, maintaining updated information on trends and individual data on the education acquired by the refugee children in Lebanon, including those children out-of-school, is a core activity. Specifically, this data helps inform advocacy and interventions to bring children into formal or informal learning opportunities, and supports the design of programmes to support the retention of those in schools.

At community level, 110 Education Outreach Volunteers work 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. From January to May 2020, more than 1,500 children attended homework support groups facilitated by UNHCR, and more than 250 children attended Basic Literacy and Numeracy classes. Parental engagement in their children's learning is being fostered through more than 100 parent community groups, and 374 Education Community Liaison volunteers, who serve as a link between parents and the school administration and teachers in 294 public schools. To increase the capacity of public schools to accommodate the large number of Lebanese and refugee students, and mitigate the impact of such a large refugee population on the public infrastructure, in 2019 UNHCR rehabilitated and expanded the size of 13 schools around the country, with a further 2 schools currently undergoing works. The works include measures to enhance the physical accessibility of children with disabilities.

Some 2,000 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 programme and are engaged in different volunteer activities within the community. UNHCR also facilitates scholarship programmes allowing refugee students to travel to third countries to pursue or resume their higher education. In 2019, 58 students undertook such travel, and a similar number is expected for 2020.

On 2 March 2020, the Government of Lebanon ordered the closure of all schools to control the spread of COVID-19, and all programmes have been delivered remotely where possible.

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 supports refugees' access to comprehensive primary health care (PHC) 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. From January-March 2020, UNHCR supported more than 12,000 primary health care consultations for refugees.

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. From January-March 2020, UNHCR supported almost 15,000 life-saving care referrals (60% of which were deliveries). In total for 2020, UNHCR plans to support around 73,000 hospitalizations.

In late 2019 UNHCR contributed to the response to a critical lack of acute medication in Lebanon by procuring and donating such medicines and reproductive health commodities to primary health care centers where refugees and vulnerable Lebanese alike go for care. In January 2020, UNHCR donated 3 months' supply of diesel fuel to the 17 Public Hospitals across Lebanon in the network where UNHCR subsidizes secondary

health care. This was determined as essential to ensure continuity of operations and service delivery for refugee and Lebanese patients.

For details of UNHCR Lebanon's health response to COVID-19, please see [UNHCR Lebanon's COVID-19 Operational Updates](#).

Shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

An integrated, area-based approach is taken to responding to refugees' acute shelter needs in informal settlements and through sustainable rehabilitation of substandard buildings. Poor urban neighbourhoods and rural areas in need of support are identified and receive targeted assistance through an integrated shelter/WASH response. In 2020, around 1,080 households will be prioritized for shelter rehabilitation and access to water and sanitation.

Technical assessments are conducted to identify substandard shelters for rehabilitation and ensure their upgrade to adequate standards in exchange for written 12-month 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. These refugees also 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 Lebanese host communities and national and local responders

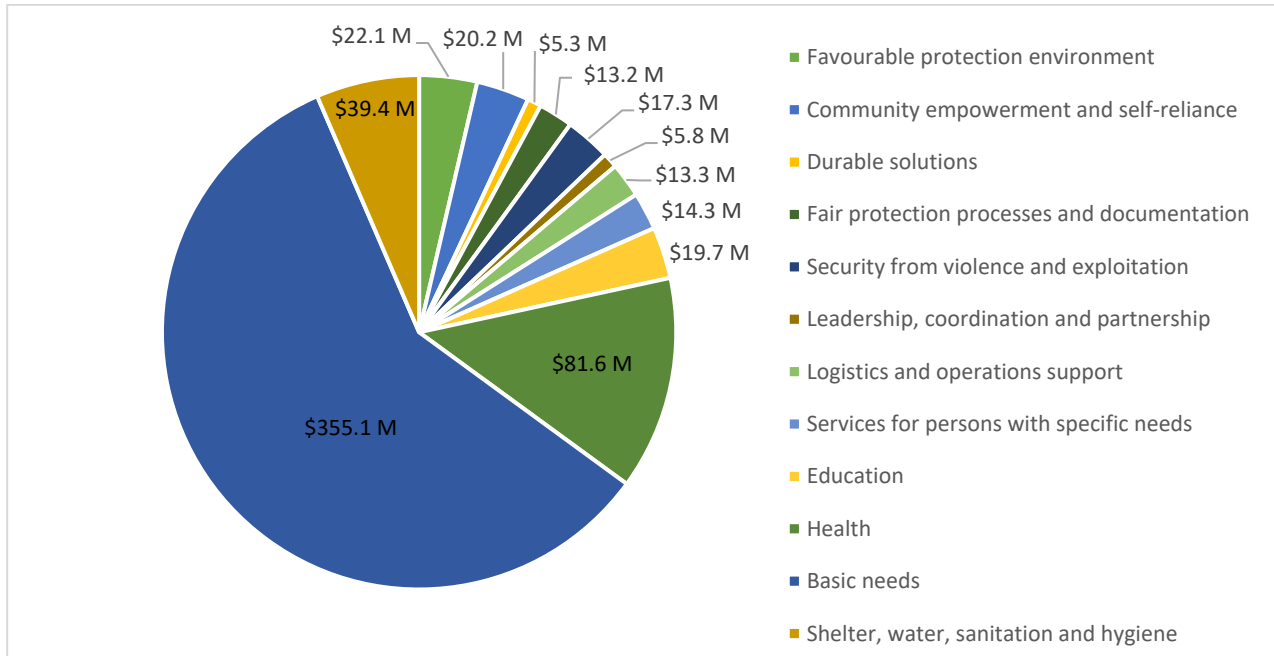
As part of UNHCR's efforts to preserve the hospitality and social stability of host communities, support is provided to central and local authorities to increase their capacity to respond to the needs of refugees and Lebanese communities affected by the presence of refugees. This support includes equipment, training, supplies, and operational staffing costs.

A number of projects to promote peaceful coexistence amongst Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities, as well as sectoral interventions targeting host communities (e.g. public infrastructure) are implemented and supported by UNHCR. In 2020 UNHCR plans to implement 137 sustainable water, wastewater, storm channels and solid waste projects in selected municipalities in the North and Bekaa regions, benefitting host communities and refugees living in these municipalities. In 2020, UNHCR aims to support 21 municipalities, benefitting 447,000 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 supports community-based activities such as youth groups.

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 to better identify stateless populations and those at risk of statelessness, and to prevent and reduce statelessness in Lebanon. In 2020, UNHCR will continue to support the Personal Status Department to facilitate the registration of births and other vital events of refugees and Lebanese, which is key to preventing and reducing the risk of statelessness. UNHCR will continue to support the removal of gender-discriminatory nationality provisions, and the inclusion of stateless persons into national and humanitarian assistance programs and plans. UNHCR will also provide technical support to the Working Group on Statelessness, and 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.

2020 financial requirements



Thank you to UNHCR Lebanon's donors in 2020

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked and other softly earmarked funds in 2020

Canada | Denmark | Finland | Germany | Ireland | Netherlands | Norway | Sweden | Switzerland
United Kingdom | United States of America | Private donors

Links

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