

# Lebanon

April - June 2019

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin

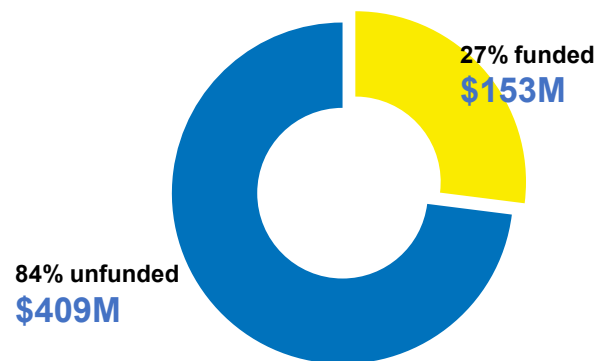


*Registration figures as of 30 June 2019. UNHCR registration of Syrian refugees in Lebanon has been suspended since May 2015 through a decision by the Government of Lebanon. The Government estimates there are 1.5 million Syrians in Lebanon.*

## FUNDING (as of July 2019)

USD 562.8 million

needed for the Lebanon operation



*This report provides a summary of key developments and results in the second quarter of 2019 in narrative and numbers (please see also the mid-year indicator report at the end of the document).*

## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The Government of Lebanon took several decisions during the reporting period which, individually and collectively, restricted the protection environment for refugees and were perceived as a signal to return. Notably, in mid-April, the Higher Defence Council (HDC) took decisions to more strictly enforce existing laws and regulations, as follows:

- Stricter enforcement of border controls, as well as measures targeting people smugglers and Syrians entering Lebanon illegally;
- Enforce laws/regulations regarding the need for foreigners who are working to hold work permits; and
- Instruction to dismantle 'hard structures' that refugees had constructed in shelters in informal settlements, without having the required permit.

Some of the direct consequences of these measures have included a number of arrests and deportations of Syrians apprehended for illegal entry; closures of shops and businesses; an increase in the number of raids; demolitions of hard structures in some informal settlements; and an increased number of collective evictions, the majority conducted based on environmental issues.

UNHCR actively engaged in advocacy with central and local authorities to call for a non-discriminatory and humane application of the law and due process guarantees. Interventions were undertaken in individual cases, particularly to prevent refoulement in deportations. Partners were engaged in converging humanitarian advocacy aimed at, inter alia, preserving a dignified protection space in general, and preventing refoulement as well as the implementation of measures in way that leave the persons affected in a vulnerable and exposed state, and is perceived as pressure to return.

### **Dismantlement of unauthorised hard structures**

Pursuant to the aforementioned HDC decision, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) were given the authority to ensure the dismantlement of unauthorised hard structures nationwide, starting in the Arsal area. UNHCR led the coordination and advocacy efforts with relevant stakeholders including several ministries, the LAF, municipalities, community-based actors, and UN partners. Advocacy efforts focused on highlighting the impact that this decision would have on refugees' dignity, protection, and socio-economic situation, and ensuring that it be implemented with minimal trauma to refugees, preventing homelessness and avoiding the removal of structures by force. In particular, UNHCR advocated for refugees to be given sufficient information and time to dismantle the structures themselves, to avoid forcible demolitions by the security agencies, which are both traumatising, especially for individuals who have fled a war and destruction of their homes, and lead to more destruction than necessary. As a result, the LAF agreed to give the refugees in Arsal around one month to dismantle the structures and maintain 5 bricks to protect them from rodents and flooding. Consultations with affected refugees took place throughout this period to ensure their perspectives were heard, and that the authorities and humanitarian organisations took all possible measures to minimize the impact of the decision on refugees' protection and dignity.

The inter-agency emergency coordination mechanisms activated in the Bekaa by UNHCR, with an Operations Cell in Arsal, ensured the implementation of a Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA). By the end of June, refugees in Arsal had dismantled around 1,300 structures, affecting around 15,000 people. UNHCR worked closely with shelter and WASH partners to allocate shelter kits, and started the provision of relief items to around 3,500 affected vulnerable households. Key messages and counselling lines for front-line staff, local authorities and other actors were developed, as was guidance on onsite rubble management, and how to estimate rubble volumes.

UNHCR maintained on-site presence in Arsal and, together with partners, conducted protection monitoring visits on a near-daily basis in order to identify and refer vulnerable refugees and persons with specific needs (PWSN) to specialized assistance and services. Despite all the efforts to minimize the negative impact of the HDC decision through promoting a humane and respectful implementation, many refugees affected expressed fear for their safety and security, separation from family and neighbours, and an increased fear of exploitation.

### **Deportations**

Following the aforementioned HDC decision regarding stricter enforcement of border controls and measures targeting irregular entry and smuggling of people and goods through land borders, the General Directorate of General Security Office (GSO) issued an instruction on 13 May providing that Syrians apprehended for irregular entry after 24 April 2019 should be deported and handed over to the Syrian immigration authorities.

Prior to these decisions, Syrians who were apprehended while attempting to enter Lebanon through unofficial crossing points were pushed back but not handed over to the Syrian authorities. Syrians apprehended inside the territory of Lebanon for having entered irregularly were instead detained and later released in Lebanon. Deportations of Syrians apprehended at the borders or within the country for having entered, or re-entered Lebanon irregularly after 24 April started taking place around 20 May.

UNHCR immediately raised its concern over the new policy and practice which – in the absence of legal procedural safeguards – could lead to cases of refoulement. Specifically, UNHCR noted the requirements in international law, to provide individuals at risk of deportation with the possibility to express any fears and concerns they may have and have these assessed in an independent judicial or administrative procedure, and advocated for the application of existing Lebanese law. Notably, article 88 of the *Penal Code* restricts the authority of issuing deportation orders

to courts in cases of irregular entry under article 32 of the *1962 Law Regulating the Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Lebanon and their Exit from the Country*. Accordingly, deportation can be executed only if there is a judicial decision. Providing people with access to such a legal safeguard helps ensure Lebanon's respect for the principle of non-refoulement, in line with the Convention against Torture and customary international law.

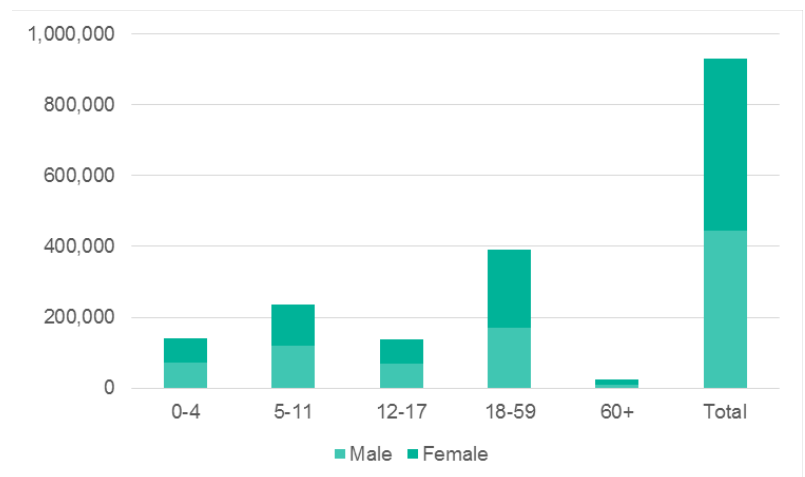
UNHCR also intervened in all cases that came to its attention of Syrians apprehended for irregular entry and expressing a fear of deportation. Some interventions led to a suspension of deportation, while others did not. In parallel, UNHCR disseminated information to refugees about the new policy and practices to increase awareness about the risks of going back temporarily to Syria and re-entering irregularly, and advised refugees to carry proof of stay in Lebanon with them at all times.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

### ACCESSING PROTECTION

#### Registration and data management

- At the end of June, 929,624 Syrians and 18,135 refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries (of which 78% are from Iraq) were registered with UNHCR in Lebanon. The number of registered refugees in Lebanon continues to gradually decrease due to departures (resettlement and returns), deaths, frequent movements between Lebanon and Syria, and the fact that new registrations of Syrian refugees have been suspended since early 2015 pursuant to a government decision.
- UNHCR continued to update data of Syrians registered prior to 2015. Syrians approaching UNHCR for protection who cannot be registered were counselled on the Government's instructions to suspend registration, and their vulnerabilities were assessed and recorded to address their critical needs. UNHCR continued to sensitize Lebanese authorities on the importance of resuming registration for Syrian refugees, which would enable the Government and the international community to better know the profile of the entire Syrian refugee population to appropriately plan and effectively respond to their needs, and find durable solutions.
- In parallel, UNHCR registered 495 non-Syrian individuals in the reporting period, of which 106 persons reported to have arrived in Lebanon in 2019.



#### Legal aid

Access to legal assistance and services continued to be a priority to protect refugees and asylum-seekers against refoulement, arbitrary arrest and detention, abuse, and exploitation.

- During the reporting period, UNHCR and its partners provided legal aid – including individual legal counselling, awareness-raising sessions and information, and representation in front of a court or administrative body – to some 9,900 Syrians and 1,400 refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. Topics included legal residency; civil registration; permits required to work; and housing, land and property (HLP) rights. Residency

renewal for Syrians based on the UNHCR certificate was suspended for more than one month (from early May to 10 June) by GSO offices across the country. According to the GSO, the suspension was a temporary measure required to complete technical improvements in GSO's processing system for Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR. UNHCR advocated with the GSO and MOIM for a speedy resumption and continued supporting the GSO with IT equipment to upscale its processing capacity at GSO centres.

- Advocacy continued on the importance of a full and inclusive application of the March 2017 fee waiver in view of divergent practices identified through UNHCR surveys, as well as for the expansion of the fee waiver to all categories of refugees, since refugees who have not been able to register with UNHCR since 2015 due to the Government's suspension have particular difficulties obtaining legal residency.
- As part of efforts to help Syrian refugees obtain legal residency, UNHCR and GSO agreed to identify individual cases of Syrian refugees who are eligible to benefit from the residency waiver but whose application was rejected by a local GSO office and refer them to GSO central for re-assessment. Since a primary reason behind the low number of refugees without valid residency is the low number of refugees approaching the GSO for renewal, an agreement was reached with the GSO to allow UNHCR to accompany groups of refugees to GSO.

### **Civil documentation**

- Support continued to be provided to the Personal Status Department (PSD), in the form of staffing and equipment to increase its capacity to register civil events. As a result of this support, the accessibility and quotas on the number of refugee files that can be submitted each week were further increased (up to double) in some of the PSD centres and the waiting time for executing birth certificates reduced.
- Individualized legal counselling was provided to some 7,200 families on how to register the birth of their children, and directly supported over 2,000 vulnerable families to register their child's birth. More than 1,150 families were counselled on marriage registration which will facilitate registration of the birth of their children and increase protection of women in case of separation, divorce or disappearance of their husband. Another 216 families who had married unofficially received support to obtain retroactive proof of their marriage.
- UNHCR continued to advocate for an extension of the waiver for the one-year deadline to administratively register the birth of Syrians in Lebanon, which ended on 8 February 2019. Without an extension of that waiver, Syrian children whose births are not be registered within one year will need to go through a lengthy and costly court procedure to register the birth. Consequently, the MOIM sent a letter to the Council of Ministers proposing an extension and approval was pending a final decision of the Council of Ministers at the time of reporting.

### **SGBV, child protection and targeted responses for groups with specific protection needs**

UNHCR continued prioritizing support to refugees who are particularly vulnerable to protection risks, such as children, survivors of SGBV, and persons with specific needs, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

- The focus for child protection continued to be on case management, particularly on enhancing Best Interests Determination (BID) processes. During the reporting period, 24 BIDs in total were initiated and 934 Best Interests Assessments (BIAs) were conducted by UNHCR and its partners for children identified at risk, who are receiving case management services to help address individual child protection concerns.
- UNHCR continued to provide a comprehensive package of prevention and response services to SGBV survivors through outreach activities and by offering safe spaces. Case management, including psychosocial support and other specialized services, was provided to close to 1,300 SGBV survivors during the reporting period. In complementarity, cash and non-cash assistance as well as community-based activities, such as emotional support groups, psychosocial support activities and awareness sessions, also continued.
- Numerous capacity-building initiatives were implemented during the reporting period, including: training for UNHCR front-line staff to enhance their skills in identifying and referring asylum seekers and refugees who are in need of mental health and psycho-social support, training to more than 300 government and partner staff on

SGBV core principles, capacity-building by UNHCR and partners on child protection and children's rights, as well as to specifically enhance the quality of BIDs for children at heightened risk.

- Limited shelter opportunities for SGBV survivors remained a challenge, aggravating survivors' protection situation, especially for female heads of household with sons older than 12 years old, survivors with mental health problems and LGBTI refugees.

### **Border monitoring**

- Individuals seeking protection may only be granted access to territory through official border points if the requirements for one of the visa entry categories are met. UNHCR maintained a regular presence at all official land border crossings with Syria (three in the north and two in the Bekaa) and conducted 643 border monitoring interviews at the crossing points, reaching more than 1,395 individuals. During these interviews, UNHCR border teams sought to identify individuals facing protection risks or specific vulnerabilities and provided counselling on border admission and exit regulations.
- According to information obtained by UNHCR, the Lebanese authorities apprehended 707 Syrian nationals attempting to enter Lebanon through unofficial crossing points during the reporting period, and most of whom were denied entry. In a few cases, UNHCR was able to provide basic assistance such as food and water.
- During the reporting period, Syrian refugees continued to leave Lebanon by air to Northern Cyprus. UNHCR Cyprus had access to persons detained upon arrival, enabling access to asylum procedures to the majority of those arriving on the island. Some cases, however, were sent back to Lebanon upon arrival in Northern Cyprus. UNHCR does not have access to individuals at the airport in Beirut, but is able to maintain some contact through the authorities. UNHCR was made aware of 22 Syrians nationals who were returned to Lebanon from Cyprus, and intervened with the authorities to advocate for them to be given the possibility to express any fears of return, and have these assessed prior to any deportation to Syria. Only three of the Syrians, who had valid residency, were re-admitted to Lebanon.
- Syrian nationals, upon the discretion of Northern Cypriot authorities, could be granted a visa on-arrival at the airport until 21 June this year, when this policy was revoked. This change, as well as more favourable weather conditions in the summer months, may increase the number of individuals attempting to make onward movements to Cyprus by boat. UNHCR is thus working closely with refugee communities and partners to sensitize refugees to the risks of attempting onward movements. During the reporting period, UNHCR was made aware of five attempts to reach Cyprus by boat, including two successful attempts. Three onward movement attempts were unsuccessful, including one boat that remains missing to date.

### **Detention monitoring**

Detention of refugees and asylum-seekers on charges of immigration-related offences remained widespread throughout Lebanon. UNHCR and its partners conducted regular visits to places of detention, including Internal Security Forces (ISF) prisons, police stations and justice palaces, to identify persons of concern in need and provide legal aid and material assistance. UNHCR did not have access to refugees detained at the airport, military detention facilities or GSO retention centres, with the exception of the GSO retention centre for non-Syrian asylum-seekers and refugees in Beirut. During the reporting period, UNHCR conducted 115 visits to detention facilities across the country and assisted 484 Syrians (76% males, 12% females and 12% children) with general protection counselling, follow-up and referrals to appropriate services. 1,700 Syrians were transferred to the Retention Centre of the GSO, mostly for immigration-related offences related to lack of legal residency. Offenders are usually released after 48 hours except for Syrians who had entered irregularly after 24 April 2019, as per the aforementioned decisions.

- In the second quarter of the year, 1,900 foreigners (excluding Syrians, Palestinians and stateless persons), were held at the GSO Retention Centre where they were administratively detained before their deportation or release. Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre (CLMC) and UNHCR jointly identified newly detained persons of concern to

UNHCR and those at risk of refoulement. Some 95 individuals registered with UNHCR were identified, counselled and assisted with interventions, including expedited refugee status determination (RSD) and resettlement assessment, to halt their deportation. In addition, release of 15 refugees was secured.

### **Community mobilization and outreach**

- Work continued on strengthening its community mobilization interventions. Community centres, outreach volunteers, community groups and participatory assessments remained key elements of the response. Women accounted for 65% of all refugees mobilized in activities. By the end of June, 54,222 individuals had accessed 27 community centres around Lebanon. The most accessed services and activities included information desks (25%), awareness sessions (23%), skills trainings (18%), basic literacy, numeracy and language classes (13%), and psychosocial support sessions (5.5%).
- UNHCR's large-scale outreach volunteer (OV) network continued. By the end of June, the network included 786 OVs of whom 49% worked as general OVs and 51% as specialized OVs covering specific protection areas such as SGBV and child protection.
- UNHCR also supported community groups to promote community empowerment and self-management. By June, there were 148 active community groups being supported including 1,355 persons (68% women), of which women's groups, collective site management groups, kids' clubs and youth groups formed the majority.

## **DIGNITY AND RESILIENCE IN EXILE**

UNHCR aims to help refugees meet their daily basic needs and maintain access to health care, education, shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to reduce their vulnerability to exploitation, harmful coping strategies and other protection risks.

### **Basic needs**

- After several years of displacement in a situation where predictable livelihood opportunities are scarce, living costs are high, and competition over jobs are increasing, the needs of refugees in Lebanon remain immense. UNHCR continued helping the most severely vulnerable refugee families meet their basic needs through cash-based interventions as an integral part of a comprehensive protection response. During the second quarter of 2019, UNHCR provided multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) to 32,258 severely vulnerable Syrian refugee families (220,500 individuals) and 1,635 refugee families of other nationalities on average each month.
- The yearly review and refinement of the targeting system started in the reporting period and aims to ensure that the refugees in greatest need of cash assistance for their survival and resilience against exploitation and other protection risks receive the assistance. The review is undertaken in collaboration with WFP and with the expert advice of an independent research entity. The specific objectives of the annual review are to: further refine the targeting formula, including by ensuring the inclusion of protection and specific needs-indicators to identify vulnerable groups such as children at risk, elderly and persons with disabilities; define a methodology to validate the refined formula/model through tests and household visits; and refine and develop the Grievance Redress Mechanism first established in 2018.
- The UNHCR/WFP joint validation exercise of MPCA beneficiaries took place in March-April and served to ensure that the right person was in possession of the right card. This exercise was conducted across the country in UNHCR and WFP dedicated sites using biometric tools such as facial recognition and iris scanning to ensure accuracy, timeliness and alignment with data protection standards. The final rate of no-show, i.e. families failing to attend the validation, was 5%.

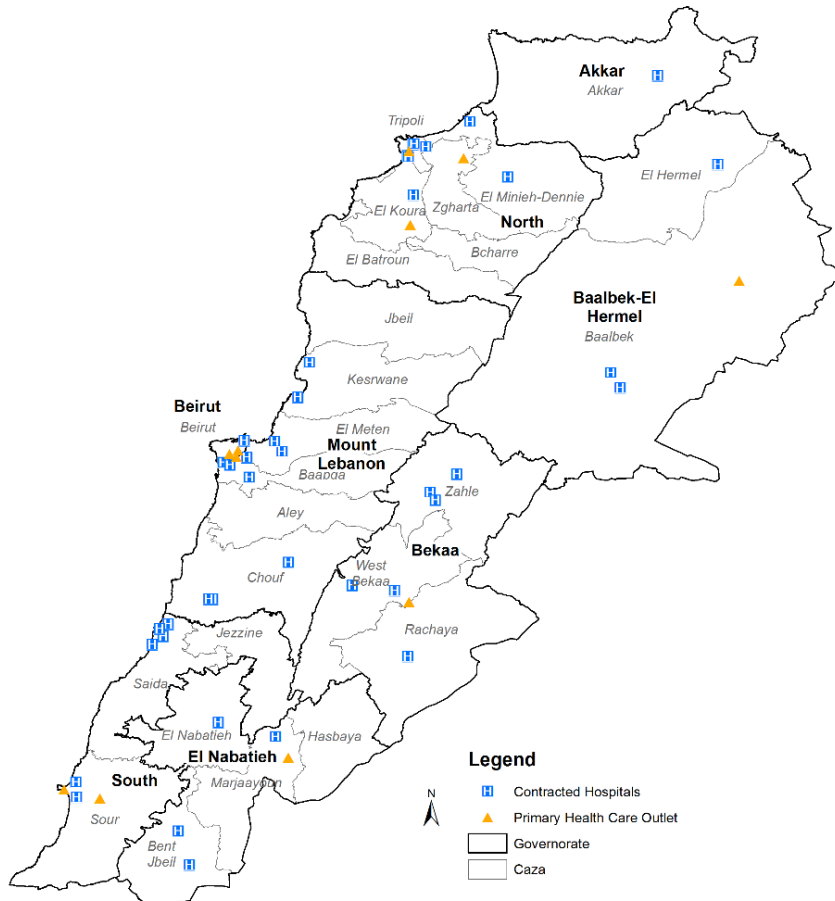
- In addition, more than 1,900 refugees received support through UNHCR’s protection cash assistance programme (PCAP). PCAP is generally used to support refugees in overcoming specific protection concerns, by securing their basic needs, covering their rent for shelter, and helping them to avoid or cease being engaged in negative coping mechanisms. PCAP has for instance allowed refugees to retrieve their identity documents confiscated by shops where they had debts or cover transportation fees to essential services such as bus transport for children to be able to go to school.
- Refugees can withdraw their UNHCR cash assistance through the common LOUISE card at any ATM in Lebanon.

### Health care

UNHCR continued to support refugees’ access to essential preventive and lifesaving curative health care services by subsidizing the cost of services through primary health care centres and a network of 40 hospitals.

- During the reporting period, UNHCR supported 16,200 primary health care consultations for refugees through five implementing partners, including for antenatal care, non-communicable diseases, and mental health consultations. By improving access to appropriate primary health care services, UNHCR aims to minimize the need for secondary health care.
- UNHCR’s secondary health care program facilitated refugees’ access to life-saving care and supported 15,900 referrals of 15,400 Syrian refugees in the second quarter of the year, of which 60% were for attended deliveries.

**MAP OF UNHCR-SUPPORTED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CENTRES AND NETWORK OF CONTRACTED HOSPITALS**



## Education

Around 50% of school-aged refugee children in Lebanon are estimated to be out of school. UNHCR aims to increase the number of children enrolled in the formal education system and support retention by identifying and providing support to out-of-school children, and strengthening the involvement and responsibility of parents and the broader community in children's schooling.

- UNHCR is targeting close to 1,500 out-of-school refugee children (aged 10-14) and youth (aged 15+) with basic literacy and numeracy (BLN) programmes. By the end of the reporting period, BLN classes had started in Bekaa, North and Beirut and Mount Lebanon.
- During the second quarter, 17 additional Parent Community Groups (PCG) were established to increase the engagement of parents in their children's education, bringing the total to 61 PCGs.
- As part of its ongoing advocacy efforts, UNHCR worked with individual school directors to confirm the identity of refugee students in order to enable them to sit official exams (G9 and G12). UNHCR reached out to refugee parents and caregivers encouraging them to collect their children's year-end academic transcripts and certificates as a first step to ensure education continuity, whether in the host country or in light of resettlement or voluntary return.
- UNHCR continued to partner with a number of NGOs to support the education of children with specific needs through: the provision of special education support and specialized services to children with learning difficulties and ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) and awareness raising sessions to their parents, teachers and orphanage supervisors; the provision of specialized support for students with mental disabilities and autism; and the coverage of tuition fees for a specialized school for children with hearing impairments, including an awareness raising programme for parents/caregivers and their children on hearing impairment.
- For tertiary education, the application process for 2019 DAFI scholarships was initiated towards the end of the reporting period.

## Shelter and WASH

- During the reporting period, the shelter and WASH response focused on mitigating the impact of decisions and instructions relating to the environmental impact of informal settlements along the Litani and other rivers, and the dismantlement of unauthorized hard structures in shelters, notably in Aarsal.
- 5,500 refugees living in informal settlements in the Bekaa (in the municipalities of Mansoura, Majdel Anjar, and Tamnin al Fouqa) benefited from improved sanitation through desludging and water quality monitoring and treatment. In addition, 2,200 refugees living in informal settlements and lacking access to safe water for drinking and cooking benefited from water trucking, and an additional 290 refugees accessed improved water storage capacity through provision of household water reservoirs.
- By the end of the reporting period, improvement works had been completed at seven flood-prone sites where site improvement activities were needed to mitigate the effects of the storms that occurred in January/February, benefiting 2,010 individuals (377 vulnerable households). UNHCR finalized building the sorting facility in Majdel Anjar, in partnership with ANERA and equipped by UNDP, as part of efforts to preserve the protection space for refugees and foster peaceful coexistence between refugees and Lebanese. Furthermore, to complement its 2018 project in North Akkar Union of Municipalities, UNHCR provided the Union with an additional solid waste collection truck to help improve solid waste collection and sorting for 9,000 people.
- As part of the preparation for the next winter season, 3,700 shelter kits were distributed to around 20,000 individuals mainly located in the Bekaa.



## SUPPORTING HOST COMMUNITIES TO PRESERVE SOCIAL STABILITY

Preserving the hospitality of and in host communities remained one of UNHCR Lebanon's main priorities, given its direct impact on the protection space for refugees.

- UNHCR continued co-leading the Social Stability core group with UNDP and MOSA, and the Tensions Task Force jointly with UNDP and key ministries (MOSA and MOIM). These two fora complement each other in monitoring inter-community relations in Lebanon, conducting joint analyses, and ensuring a coordinated response to defuse tensions and prevent conflict. Two monthly tensions briefs (April and May) were produced during the reporting period. The briefs showed that social tensions increased in the first half of 2019, in particular due to increasing politicization of environmental and resource issues, measures taken by the authorities that are restricting the protection space for refugees, and a sharpening political discourse particularly on returns. Tensions connected to socio-economic and resource-related issues increased, manifesting in negative inter-communal relations and violent incidents. In a context of economic crisis, austerity measures and high unemployment, refugees are increasingly being blamed for economic, social and environmental problems in the country. While competition – real and perceived – over low-skilled jobs remained the primary driver of tensions between Lebanese and Syrians, the impact of informal refugee settlements on the environment have also become significant. One very worrying development seen in the reporting period was the rise in intra-Lebanese tensions, including between groups and municipalities of different religious affiliation.
- UNHCR continued to foster meaningful engagement between communities through community-based initiatives. Planning continued for Community Support Projects (CSPs) and Solidarity Initiatives (SIs) across the country. During the reporting period, nine WASH CSPs were designed, and one project – the construction of a storm water/irrigation canal in Akkar – commenced. By the end of June, six SI projects had been completed across the country. An additional 32 proposals were received and 17 approved during the reporting period.
- UNHCR also continued supporting the rehabilitation and expansion of 15 public schools, which started in September 2018. Works on 12 schools progressed during the reporting period which included the completion of expansion works at one school in Deitr Kifa in South Lebanon in June, and the start of works to expand Douma public school in North Lebanon in May.
- As of June, UNHCR commenced the provision of staffing, capacity building, and equipment support to six ministries (MOSA, MEHE, MOIM, MOSDA, MOFA and the Ministry of Environment).
- UNHCR also engaged with civil society actors, law professors and economists, to build alliances of actors seeking to promote evidence-based debates and advocate to prevent inter-communal tensions from rising. For example, UNHCR and the World Bank convened a roundtable with economists to take stock of the research and evidence available on the costs of hosting refugees.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

In the second quarter of 2019, UNHCR continued its communication activities with the aim of preserving hospitality and preventing anti-refugee sentiments from rising, by sensitizing the public to the situation of refugees and building public awareness about UNHCR's mission and work, including its support to national institutions and host communities.

UNHCR took proactive steps to counterbalance negative media stories and help preserve the protection space for Syrian refugees in Lebanon through media engagement, conducting interviews with local and international media, public campaigns, web and video stories, media visits, press releases, and social media content.

Specifically, UNHCR launched a public campaign and social experiment that centred on solidarity during Ramadan by inviting a Lebanese and Syrian family for Iftar and filming their interaction. The video was widely shared on social media and amplified by high profile supporters and influencers, inviting Lebanese social media users to invite refugee families for Iftar during Ramadan. UNHCR also organized a field visit with regional and Lebanese high-profile supporters and social media influencers to refugee families which was highly covered on social media and in media.

Media and public interest around Syrian refugees in Lebanon remained high, with the office receiving numerous queries each week from the national, regional, and international press. Issues related to return and the socio-economic situation of Syrian refugees after years in exile remained at the heart of media interest.

Monitoring and analysis of media reports, public perceptions, sentiments and trends continued in order to inform UNHCR's media and social media outreach and engagement.

By the end of the second quarter of 2019, UNHCR's PI team had undertaken 71 media interviews with TV, radio, and print national and international news outlets. In addition, 7 press releases were issued, and 16 human interest web and video stories had been published.

## REALISING SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT Resettlement

UNHCR estimates that as many as 10% of the Syrian refugees in the region, including Lebanon, have resettlement needs. Resettlement and the identification of complementary pathways remained a key component of UNHCR's efforts to find durable solutions for the most vulnerable and at risk refugees.

Resettlement 2012-2019



Due to limitations in reception capacity by receiving countries, it remains particularly challenging to process large families of six persons and above, and refugees presenting high needs. In light of reduced resettlement quotas, UNHCR Lebanon continued to actively engage in seeking solutions for refugees through alternative/complementary pathways, including through a pilot family reunification project. Counselling is provided to refugees on States' family reunification programmes, assistance with administrative procedures and travel costs, interventions with respect to exit clearance. Advocacy is conducted with relevant embassies in order to expedite family reunification processing for particularly vulnerable cases.

- During the reporting period UNHCR submitted 2,686 Syrian refugees and 614 refugees of other nationalities to resettlement countries. 2,032 Syrian refugees and 173 refugees of other nationalities departed under the

resettlement program. Two Syrian refugees have so far travelled through labour mobility; one to Australia and another to Canada, and 35 refugees travelled under family reunification and the humanitarian corridor.

## Repatriation

- In the first half of 2019, UNHCR verified the departure of 6,840 individuals (61% females and 39% males) who returned on their own from Lebanon to Syria, of which 4,411 individuals departed in the second quarter of the year. In addition, 3,576 individuals (45% females and 55% males), of whom 2,836 were known to UNHCR, returned to Syria in self-organized or GSO-facilitated group movements, including 1,576 in the second quarter.
- The five most cited reasons for returning were “socio-economic conditions in Lebanon” such as inability to pay for rent, food, medical costs, education and other necessities (35%); “improved security in Syria” (11%); “family reunification” (8%); “ability to find work/livelihoods in Syria” (6%); and “access to basic service” in place of return such as health, water, electricity (5%). Individual respondents were able to cite multiple reasons.
- Although UNHCR is not organizing voluntary repatriation to Syria, the office continues to liaise with the GSO regarding planned movements. While overall returns slightly increased during the reporting period, the number of persons taking advantage of GSO-facilitated returns appeared to be decreasing. In 2018, GSO facilitated the return of 11,133 people, or an average of 928 per month. In 2019, by mid-year, there were 3,576 GSO-facilitated returns or an average of 596 per month.
- UNHCR continued convening inter-ministerial meetings on return, providing general updates on refugees’ intentions and the obstacles they express in regard to return, and efforts to address these, as well as information on specific topics like military conscription and housing, land, and property rights issues.

## LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP

UNHCR, as the coordinator of the humanitarian refugee response under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), led by MOSA, continued to play a leading role in inter-agency and inter-sector coordination. In these fora and within the sectors, UNHCR promotes the centrality of protection and a holistic and complementary approach through a direct coordination role and dedicated staffing support. In 2019, UNHCR continues to co-lead the Protection, Basic Assistance, Health, Shelter, and Social Stability Sectors within the LCRP, with a focus on preventing a deterioration of the well-being and dignity of the most vulnerable people targeted through the response.

- Inter-Agency teams continued to generate lessons learned from the winter storms early in the year, including ensuring harmonized tools and live access by partners to emergency data. As a result, the nationwide emergency response system has been strengthened and a tool – Eye on the Situation – has been put in place to facilitate the use of data in the operationalization of the response, including in the context of the dismantlement of unauthorized hard structures in refugee shelters.
- The annual review of the inter-agency coordination structure took place in May and recommendations will be provided in the third quarter of the year. Preliminary findings signalled a need to remain focused on core components of the response, including strengthening referral systems between agencies, protection mainstreaming, and increase joint analyses at field level as well as reinforcing collective advocacy efforts.
- A new ActivityInfo tool was launched in June to systematically track restrictive and/or unlawful measures. These include – but are not limited to – measures imposed by municipalities affecting refugees, such as curfews, or other specific protection incidents, such as raids. Collective evictions continued to be tracked as well, and quarterly dashboards were produced and published, including key statistics and trends analysis.

UNHCR Lebanon is grateful for the support of its donors, including major donors of unearmarked and regional funds, as well as private donors:



## PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS

### January - June 2019

#### Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers

	Reached Jan-Jun	2019 Target (prioritized)*	2019 Target (if fully funded)
<b>Protection</b>			
Persons receiving legal assistance	20,498	30,000	51,350
Persons assisted with civil status registration or documentation	23,893	40,000	62,500
Persons submitted for resettlement and humanitarian admission	5,477	7,900	7,900
Monitoring visits to detention centres conducted	201	1,300	1,900
Persons assisted through SGBV psychosocial support	1,875	2,247	2,800
Community groups and volunteers supported	834	932	1,390
Individuals/cases receiving protection or emergency cash assistance	4,227	8,347	14,815
<b>Basic Assistance</b>			
Average number of households assisted with monthly multi-purpose cash grants	32,142	33,000	84,000
Households receiving seasonal support (winter 2018-19)	167,339	165,000	170,000
<b>Health</b>			
Individuals benefitting from referral health care	31,321	66,516	91,118
<b>Education</b>			
Children enrolled in basic education	207,439	250,000	300,000
Students enrolled in upper secondary education	1,276	4,907	12,260
<b>Shelter and WASH</b>			
Shelter maintenance tool kits and materials provided	6,561	24,890	44,110
Households benefitting from shelter upgrades in exchange for an occupancy agreement	51	2,100	7,057
Individuals with access to improved sanitation	66,824	145,714	238,262
Individuals assisted with improved access to adequate quantity of safe water for drinking and for domestic use	3,318	42,347	128,490
<b>Public information</b>			
Public awareness campaigns conducted	1	2	2
Opinion surveys conducted	0	1	1
Interviews with media given	71	120	120
Media stories on UNHCR operations published	16	15	15
Media monitored and analyzed	181	365	365

**Institutional and community support**
**2019 Budget (USD)**

Institutional support (rehabilitation of infrastructure, staffing and training, equipment, supplies, medications and vaccines)	12.5 million
Community-based projects (health, education, livelihoods, WASH, roads and community facilities)	4.5 million
<b>Total invested</b>	<b>17 million</b>

**Refugees and asylum-seekers (other nationalities)**

<b>Protection</b>	<b>Reached Jan-Jun</b>	<b>2019 Target (prioritized)*</b>	<b>2019 Target (if fully funded)</b>
Persons receiving legal assistance	1,363	2,500	5,000
Persons assisted with civil status registration or documentation	215	400	800
Monitoring visits to detention centres conducted	242	850	1,700
Persons submitted for resettlement and humanitarian admission	614	900	900
Persons departed through resettlement	262	400	400
Individuals/cases receiving protection or emergency cash assistance	218	400	700
Individuals with specific needs receiving non-cash support	307	1,000	2,000
Persons assisted through SGBV psychosocial support	122	200	250
<b>Basic Assistance</b>			
Average number of households assisted with monthly multi-purpose cash grants	1,636	1,635	2,160
Households receiving seasonal support (winter 2018-19)	2,539	2,700	2,700
<b>Health</b>			
Individuals benefitting from life-saving emergency and obstetric referral health care	301	520	1,000
<b>Education</b>			
Sensitization and community mobilization campaigns conducted to promote school enrolment	5	47	90

**Stateless**

<b>Protection</b>	<b>Reached Jan-Jun</b>	<b>2019 Target (prioritized)*</b>	<b>2019 Target (if fully funded)</b>
Persons receiving legal assistance	169	380	560

\* As of March 2019. Priorities and targets are subject to change throughout the year to respond to unforeseen needs, funds available, and other factors.