

Lebanon

January - December 2019

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Country of origin

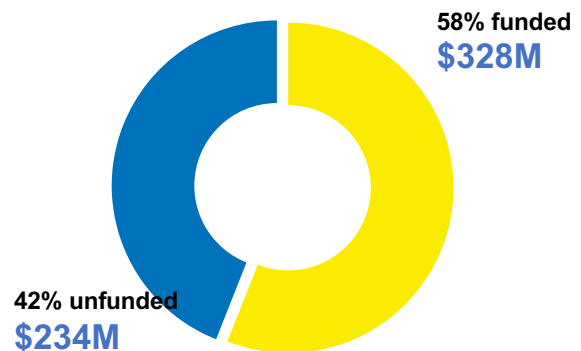


Registration figures as of 31 December 2019. UNHCR registration of Syrian refugees in Lebanon has been suspended since May 2015 through a decision by the Government of Lebanon. The Government estimates there are 1.5 million Syrians in Lebanon.

FUNDING (31 December 2019)

USD 562.8 million

requested for the Lebanon operation



OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Lebanon continues to host the largest refugee population per capita in the world, with an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees (of whom 914,648 were registered with UNHCR at the end of 2019) and around 18,000 refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities. The protracted refugee presence remained a primary topic in political and public discourse in Lebanon, with references regularly being made to the impact particularly on the economy, unemployment and the environment.

As the economic crisis in Lebanon became more tangible, nationwide protests calling for government reform led to the resignation of the Government in October. Greater competition over basic resources, coupled with the absence of a social safety net for poor Lebanese added to intercommunal tensions that had been rising for years. The 2019 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) confirmed that poverty among the refugee population increased, with 73% of the Syrians found to be living below the poverty line, and 55% living in extreme poverty. Debts also increased and shelter conditions worsened in an environment where income-generating possibilities became scarce and living costs increased. Refugees of other nationalities remained in a similarly precarious situation.

The decisions taken by the Higher Defence Council in April 2019 to more strictly apply laws and regulations in respect to Syrians led to instructions to dismantle unauthorized shelter structures, to consider deportation for Syrians who had entered Lebanon irregularly after 24 April 2019, and to enforce the permit requirements for foreign workers. UNHCR advocated for the decisions to be interpreted in a non-discriminatory manner, with respect for due process, averting and mitigating the implementation of some measures. UNHCR continued to urge the Government to apply the procedural safeguards in the national law to deportation cases to prevent refoulement.

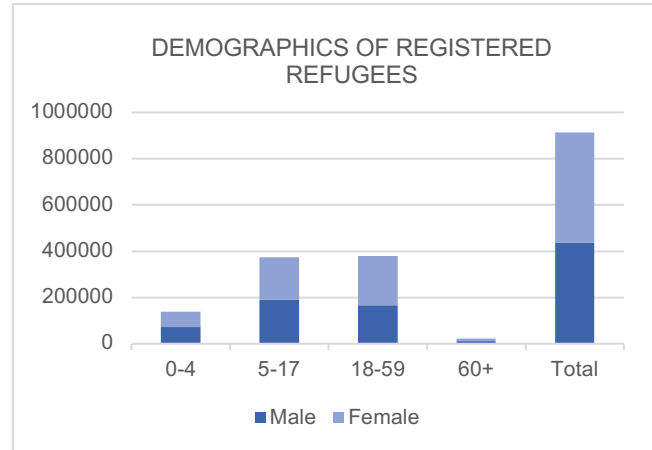
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

ACCESSING PROTECTION

Registration and data management

At the end of 2019, 914,648 Syrian and 17,971 refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities were registered with UNHCR in Lebanon.

- Since the instruction by the Government to stop new registration of Syrians in early 2015, the number of Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR in Lebanon continues to gradually decrease (down 3.6% compared to end-2018), mainly due to departures (resettlement and repatriation) and deaths. UNHCR continued to update the data of Syrians registered prior to 2015 and register children born in Lebanon to registered Syrian refugees, jointly with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA). Syrians approaching UNHCR for protection who cannot be registered are counselled on the Government's instruction to suspend registration, and assessed for vulnerabilities so that their critical needs can be addressed.
- Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers continue to make up the majority (76%) of refugees and asylum-seekers from countries other than Syria, followed by Sudanese (13%) and Ethiopians (4%). The number of registered refugees of other nationalities is also gradually decreasing (by 1.3% compared to end-2018).



Civil documentation

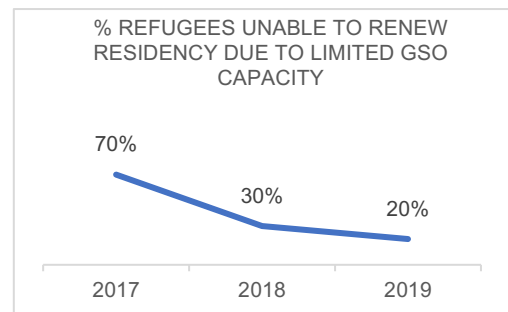
- UNHCR continued to inform refugees on **civil registration** procedures through mass communication tools, community-based approaches, and legal counselling at community centres and reception centres, as well as through outreach volunteers, protection monitors and partners. As a result, UNHCR and partners provided individualized legal counselling to some 32,000 families on how to register the birth of their children, and directly supported more than 9,000 families to register their child's birth. More than 200 families whose children are considered at highest risk of statelessness (such as single female heads of households, separated families, and couples without proof of marriage) were assisted to obtain proof of kinship from the Sharia court which would prove the child's lineage and age. Some 800 families who had married unofficially were supported to obtain retroactive proof of their marriage and 4,800 families were counselled on marriage registration, with the aim to facilitate registration of the birth of their children and increase protection of women in case of separation, divorce or disappearance of their husband.
- To assist the Government's initiatives in ensuring that all births of refugee children born in Lebanon are registered, UNHCR continued to support the Directorate General of Personal Status (DGPS) through staffing and equipment to increase its capacity to register civil events. These efforts led to more consistent practices by the different offices, less processing and waiting time, and facilitated the digitalization of all Syrian records.
- The August 2019 expansion of the waiver of the one-year deadline for **birth registration** to include all Syrian refugee children born in Lebanon between 1 January 2011 and 9 February 2019 (although not to refugees and asylum-seekers from other countries) was a positive policy development. The simplification of the requirement to show proof of marriage in order to register births also contributed to the significant progress achieved in registration levels. According to the 2019 VASyR, significant improvements were noted across all seven steps of the birth registration process for Syrian refugee children born in Lebanon. The rate of births registered with the Nofous increased to 48% from 40% in 2018 and the Foreigners' Registry increased to 30% from 21% in

2018. Moreover, there was also an improvement in the rate of **marriage registration** with the Foreigners' Registry for those who got married in Lebanon, to 26% in 2019 compared to 20% in 2018. UNHCR also assisted refugees of other nationalities to complete the registration of their children's births through the regular administrative procedures.

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.

- About 50,000 Syrians and 2,300 refugees and asylum-seekers of other nationalities received legal aid from UNHCR and its partners in 2019. This included legal awareness and individual counselling, legal assistance and representation in front of a court or administrative body. Legal aid also covered key areas such as obtaining residency, protection from refoulement and detention, addressing exploitation and abuse – including evictions, trafficking in human beings, human rights violations and harassment – and family and labour law.
- UNHCR continued activities aimed at increasing the numbers of refugees with **valid residency**. In 2019, UNHCR accompanied 454 Syrians to different GSO centres to submit their renewal residency applications and 87% successfully submitted their renewal applications to the GSO (the remaining lacked some required documentation). Follow-up with 55% of refugees who were able to submit their renewal application found that 97% had successfully renewed their residency. UNHCR also completed its support to further expand GSO capacity to process residency applications through renovations as well as ICT infrastructure and software. The positive impact of these support projects is evident in the UNHCR residency survey conducted annually since 2017, whereby the percentage of refugees unable to renew their residency due to the limited GSO capacity has decreased by 50 percentage points from 2017.



Child protection, SGBV and targeted responses for groups with specific protection needs

- Based on consultations with refugees, monitoring and partner reports, the deteriorating socio-economic conditions led to a growing number of children at risk of or subject to violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse, and widespread child protection issues. Children and caregivers face growing psychosocial distress and are in need of psychological support. Furthermore, according to the National Gender-Based Violence Information Management System, SGBV further increased, including incidents such as sexual and physical assault, psychological/emotional abuse and denial of resources. An increase in the number of persons with specific needs (PWSN) contacting UNHCR seeking financial support due to their inability to meet their basic survival needs was also noted.
- In order to respond to the most vulnerable cases, UNHCR provided support to more than 2,500 vulnerable children and some 4,000 Best Interests Assessments were conducted by UNHCR and its partners as part of **case management** for children identified at risk. This resulted in the mitigation of further risks for them and an improvement in the safety and protection of the most vulnerable children and their families. In addition, 115 Best Interests Determinations were initiated or in process, resulting in the implementation of solutions in line with the children's needs and best interests.
- To complement case management, UNHCR continued providing **community-based support** through 62 child protection Outreach Volunteers (OVs) who visited some 900 children at risk, with a focus on unaccompanied and separated children and children with disabilities. This resulted in community-based support of children, as well as increased engagement of children with disabilities in community activities with peers. This was

reinforced by conducting around 2,010 information-sharing and awareness-raising sessions in the community on child protection related topics and available services.

- UNHCR **prevention against SGBV** included community-level interventions which consistently focused on informative sessions and awareness raising in community centres on risks of SGBV, its consequences and reporting mechanisms. These activities were complemented by outreach activities through volunteers working with adult men, persons with disabilities and older persons who have limited presence at community centres. Moreover, UNHCR continued to engage with men and boys from refugee and host communities to prevent SGBV from occurring, particularly by addressing root causes, namely gender discrimination and abuse of power. UNHCR provided survivors with counselling and psychosocial support and increased access to services through individual referrals. Services included legal aid to address issues of domestic violence and abuse, as well as protection cash-based interventions to address protection and primary survival needs, and health care assistance.
- UNHCR and its partners continued to provide a comprehensive package of services for **PWSN**, reaching 5,400 PWSN in 2019 including refugees with serious medical conditions, mental health and psychosocial issues as well as other protection concerns.

Border monitoring

- UNHCR continued its border monitoring activities and a regular presence at the official land border crossing points to gain a better understanding of the profiles of Syrians entering and exiting Lebanon, as well as the reasons for these movements. UNHCR conducted weekly monitoring missions at the main border crossing points in the East and North. During these visits, UNHCR undertook 4,800 border monitoring interviews to identify vulnerable individuals, provide counselling on border admission and exit regulations, and provide basic humanitarian assistance including food and water, as required.
- UNHCR also continued to monitor **onward movements** by boat. In 2019, UNHCR received reports of 17 attempts to reach Cyprus, out of which 8 were successful. UNHCR provided counselling and assistance to those arrested in Lebanon, including medical support and advocacy for release and against refoulement.

In 2019:

4,819 border monitoring interviews conducted

32,000 families received individualized legal counselling on how to register the birth of their children

9,100 vulnerable families assisted to register the birth of their child

4,800 families counselled on marriage registration to facilitate the birth registration of their children and increase protection of women in case of separation, divorce or disappearance of their husband

760 couples who married unofficially helped to obtain retroactive proof of their marriage

4,700 Syrians in detention received psychosocial counselling, legal support, medical attention & CRIs

27 community centres supported with staff and activities benefiting both Lebanese and refugees

676 outreach volunteers mobilized

167,000 refugees reached by OV's through home visits and info/awareness sessions

Detention monitoring

UNHCR and partners continued to conduct detention monitoring activities in prisons, police stations and justice palaces, but remained unable to access military detention facilities or refugees detained at the airport.

- UNHCR and its partners conducted 2,300 visits to detention facilities in 2019. The main concerns observed during these visits continued to be overcrowded cells (leading to children being detained with adults in police stations), hygiene and sanitation issues, mistreatment, and lack of core relief items (CRIs). The duration of detention of Syrians at police stations increased due to a lack of prison capacity and slow judicial procedures for non-immigration offences, or lengthier investigations on date and type of entry to Lebanon for immigration-

related offences. Many detainees, including children, spent up to one month in detention, well beyond the 48 hours allowed under the law. To address some of these challenges, UNHCR and its partners assisted 4,700 people, prioritized based on specific risks and vulnerabilities, with psychosocial counselling, legal support, medical attention and CRIs. Identification of and support to children detained in all types of detention facilities were prioritized, and 200 children were provided with social workers support, legal aid, medical services and CRIs. Phone cards were also distributed to allow detainees to maintain contact with their family. Legal awareness sessions were conducted with detainees to enhance their knowledge of their rights and legal procedures and some individuals were supported with legal representation.

Community mobilization and outreach

UNHCR continued efforts to build on the capacity of community members to engage in their own protection. This included supporting refugees to engage in two-way communication with UNHCR, safely identify and refer persons at heightened risk in need of protection and assistance, as well as implement solutions for themselves.

- **Community engagement** includes a network of 676 OVs, 27 community centres and 172 community groups, as well as OV-led Facebook pages. In 2019, OVs reached 98,000 people through home visits and 69,000 people through information and awareness sessions on various topics including available services, early marriage prevention, and marriage and birth registration. In addition, more than 131,000 people (65% female) accessed the 27 UNHCR-supported community centres in 2019. The most accessed services and activities were information desks, awareness sessions, skills trainings, basic literacy, numeracy and language classes and psychosocial support.



Khaled fled Syria in 2013 with his family to ensure their safety and allow his children to keep pursuing their education. He has been volunteering with UNHCR for 5 years as an education OV to “give back to his community”, going above and beyond his duties to help refugee children continue studying for a chance at a better future.

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

- UNHCR assisted on average 32,800 refugee families per month with **multi-purpose cash assistance** (MPCA) in 2019. As part of measures to enhance accountability to affected populations, refugees could initiate a review process of their eligibility through the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). UNHCR received claims from 69,500 families, of which 2,490 were included for MPCA starting January 2020.
- UNHCR’s outcome monitoring of its MPCA programme in 2019 showed that the assistance allowed families to rely less on debt and improve their ability to pay rent on time, positively affecting their security as tenants. Moreover, assisted families had more positive perceptions of their wellbeing related to finances, health, environment and hopefulness.

- From November, in addition to shelter weatherproofing (see below), UNHCR provided **winter cash** assistance (unrestricted cash grant or fuel card) to 260,400 families (more than 900,000 individuals), mainly refugee families and a smaller number of vulnerable Lebanese families, to help them cope with additional strains caused by cold weather, fewer income generating opportunities and increased expenses to stay warm. The assistance allowed them to spend more money on fuel for heating, heaters and winter clothes. More than 9,100 families (45,700 individuals) received blankets and mattresses.

Health care

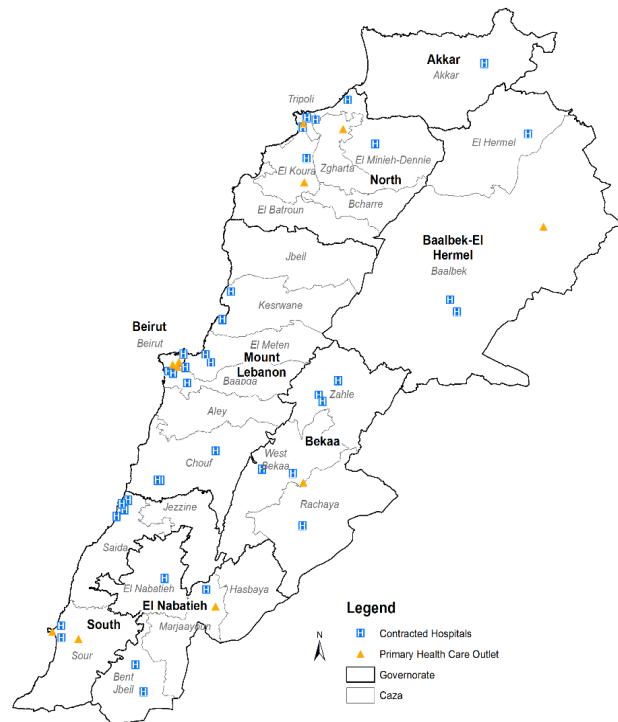
UNHCR continues to support refugees' access to comprehensive primary, secondary and tertiary health care by subsidizing services through a hospital network and implementing partners.

- In 2019, UNHCR supported 69,500 **primary health care** consultations through five implementing partners, including for antenatal care, non-communicable diseases, and mental health.
- UNHCR's **secondary health care** programme facilitated refugees' access to life-saving care and supported 61,000 referrals in 2019, of which 62% were for deliveries.

Education

- Due to protests and teachers' strikes, public schools were suspended for several weeks in Q4. However, by December, most schools around the country were operating normally for both shifts. Towards the end of the year, UNHCR started circulating key education-related messages to refugee communities to approach second-shift school for registration, which had been affected by the latest events. The MEHE extended the registration date until end-February 2020. Non-formal education programmes were also temporarily suspended. Road closures, drastic increases in transportation fees, and security fears limited the mobility of children. UNHCR and its partners adopted alternative work modalities to monitor activities.
- The **Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN)** programme enabled UNHCR to accelerate the core learning of some of the most vulnerable refugee children and position them to transition into formal education. In 2019, 920 children (aged 10-14) benefitted from BLN classes, while 150 youth (aged 15-24) were enrolled in Youth Basic Literacy and Numeracy classes.
- With regards to **retention activities** in 2019, 2,238 children attended Homework Support Groups, where they improved their organizational and academic skills by interacting with peers in safe and supervised learning environments. Additionally, 388 Education Community Liaisons (ECLs) were deployed in 294 second shift schools to make schools as child-friendly and safe as possible. Due to the presence of ECLs, decreased violence and an increased sense of security and support were reported by parents.
- UNHCR continued promoting **inclusive education** for refugee children with disabilities through various initiatives. In 2019, UNHCR supported 215 refugee children with disabilities across Lebanon by facilitating their retention within the Lebanese education system or by subsidizing tuition fees to access certified specialized institutions. Support varied from the provision of speech therapy to specialized educational activities and

Map of UNHCR-supported PHCs and network of contracted hospitals



medical support. UNHCR also procured a Braille printer for MEHE to support with the printing of scholastic books for children with visual impairments.

Shelter and WASH

- In informal settlements (ISs), and as part of UNHCR's comprehensive winterization programme, UNHCR boosted assistance to eligible households identified for **shelter support** through the unified weatherproofing assessment. Through the winterization programme, 32,400 vulnerable families received in-kind shelter kits as well as cash assistance to weatherproof shelters in 2019. UNHCR also continued to lead the response to emergencies resulting from heavy storms, floods, fire, and evictions, and supported 660 affected households to rebuild their damaged shelters.
- Outside ISs, UNHCR targeted the most deprived and underserved urban and rural areas across the country. Some 1,300 vulnerable households living in substandard shelters in such areas benefitted from shelter upgrades to meet minimum standards, improved tenure security through written occupancy agreements with landlords, and enhanced access to improved water supply, wastewater disposal, and hygiene awareness.
- As part of a continuous preparedness and response framework to fire hazard reduction, 1,700 fire prevention and awareness-raising sessions were conducted across the country, complementing the refill and distribution of 4,400 fire kits.
- More than 145,000 people benefitted from improved **water sanitation** through communal projects and 9,600 people benefitted through household interventions. UNHCR promoted personal hygiene and sound environment practices with focus on handwashing, menstrual hygiene and SW sorting UNHCR also finalized addressing sanitation concerns in ISs located in three municipalities of the Bekaa. Subsequently, WASH coverage in ISs was successfully handed over by UNHCR to UNICEF at the end of 2019.
- UNHCR also improved access for 132,000 people to **solid waste (SW) management** services through improving municipal waste collection services, reducing municipal collection costs by half in 29 municipalities (in Akkar), operationalizing two SW sorting facilities in the Bekaa, implemented in collaboration with UNDP, and engaging with communities on SW awareness raising. The support provided also contributed to mitigating the eviction risks generated by waste dumping in the Litani riverbed and vicinity. UNHCR provided tools (sand cleaner, plastic shredder) and bins to facilitate waste collection in vulnerable neighbourhoods.



UNHCR distributing shelter materials in Damour, Mount Lebanon, to support refugees in the area to reinforce their tents. The weatherproofing kits include plastic sheeting, plywood and timber.

SUPPORTING HOST COMMUNITIES TO PRESERVE SOCIAL STABILITY

Throughout 2019, social tensions between host communities and refugees increased significantly. The deep economic crisis in the country, resulting in rising unemployment and a spike in prices, is adding another layer of complexity to the situation, exacerbating the competition between Lebanese and refugees for resources for basic survival, and directly increasing the poverty and vulnerabilities of both populations.

UNHCR aimed to mitigate inter-communal tensions by extending its support to both individual Lebanese and to institutions. UNHCR focused on supporting service delivery and enhancing capacities of public officials to respond

to crisis. As such, support was provided to seven ministries (MOSA, MEHE, MOIM, Ministry of State for Displaced Affairs, MOFA, MOEW) including through staffing, capacity building and equipment and supplies. At the community level, UNHCR supported 20,000 Lebanese families with a USD 200 one-time cash grant or a fuel card as part of its winter assistance programme, as well as with other community support projects and initiatives, including on solid waste management, wastewater and flood mitigation. The rationale behind this decision was to help mitigate rising poverty among Lebanese families at a particularly difficult time of the year, which was fuelling intercommunal tensions.

REALISING SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT

Resettlement

UNHCR continued to prioritize refugees for resettlement based on their protection vulnerabilities.

- More than 9,500 Syrian refugees and 1,200 refugees from countries other than Syria were submitted for resettlement consideration, and 7,400 Syrian refugees and 900 refugees of other nationalities departed Lebanon on resettlement to third countries. Refugees also departed through labour mobility, family reunification and humanitarian corridors.

Repatriation

UNHCR is aware of around 24,000 Syrian refugees who returned to Syria on their own or in group movements facilitated by General Security in 2019, compared to the 16,700 returns noted by UNHCR in 2018.

- Where possible, UNHCR supported refugees with civil documentation, information on services available in Syria, and vaccinations. The main reasons for return cited by the refugees included reunification with family members in Syria, improved security in their place of return, and the socio-economic situation in Lebanon.



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 - December 2019

Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers

	Reached Jan-Dec	2019 Target (prioritized)	2019 Target (if fully funded)
Protection			
Persons receiving legal assistance	50,501	50,000	65,350
Persons assisted with civil status registration or documentation	47,733	47,700	62,500
Persons submitted for resettlement and humanitarian admission	9,588	7,900	7,900
Monitoring visits to detention centres conducted	1,569	1,500	1,900
Persons assisted through SGBV psychosocial support	2,550	2,247	2,800
Community groups and volunteers supported	848	932	1,390
Individuals/cases receiving protection or emergency cash assistance	7,293	8,347	14,815
Basic Assistance			
Average number of households assisted with monthly multi-purpose cash grants	31,501	33,000	84,000
Households receiving seasonal support (winter 2018-19)	258,197	258,197	258,197
Health			
Individuals benefitting from referral health care	61,154	66,516	91,118
Education			
Children enrolled in basic education	195,579	250,000	300,000
Students enrolled in upper secondary education	4,903	4,907	12,260
Shelter and WASH			
Shelter maintenance tool kits and materials provided	32,444	32,400	44,110
Households benefitting from shelter upgrades in exchange for an occupancy agreement	1,273	1,550	5,249
Individuals with access to improved sanitation	154,801	145,714	238,262
Individuals assisted with improved access to adequate quantity of safe water for drinking and for domestic use	20,060	42,150	128,387
			2019 Planned Budget (USD)
Institutional and community support			
Institutional support (rehabilitation of infrastructure, staffing and training, equipment, supplies, medications and vaccines)			13.0 million
Community-based projects (health, education, livelihoods, WASH, roads and community facilities)			9.6 million
Total invested			22.6 million

Refugees and asylum-seekers (other nationalities)

	Reached Jan-Dec	2019 Target (prioritized)	2019 Target (if fully funded)
Protection			
Persons receiving legal assistance	2,347	2,000	4,000
Persons assisted with civil status registration or documentation	313	400	800
Monitoring visits to detention centres conducted	761	850	1,700
Persons submitted for resettlement and humanitarian admission	1,258	900	900
Persons departed through resettlement	917	400	400
Individuals/cases receiving protection or emergency cash assistance	485	485	700
Individuals with specific needs receiving non-cash support	1,633	1,650	2,000
Persons assisted through SGBV psychosocial support	187	200	250
Basic Assistance			
Average number of households assisted with monthly multi-purpose cash grants	1,317	1,500	2,160
Households receiving seasonal support (winter 2019-20)	2,247	3,000	3,000
Health			
Individuals benefitting from life-saving emergency and obstetric referral health care	380	520	1,000
Education			
Sensitization and community mobilization campaigns conducted to promote school enrolment	108	110	150

Stateless

	Reached Jan-Dec	2019 Target (prioritized)	2019 Target (if fully funded)
Protection			
Persons receiving legal assistance	374	380	560