



**UNHCR'S SUPPORT TO
LEBANON'S COVID-19
RESPONSE**

JULY 2020



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

IN HER WORDS

“Our response is about saving lives”

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has been working within the framework of the national response to the emergency, and in close collaboration with WHO, UNICEF and other partners to ensure that refugees' needs are addressed in a coordinated, equal and coherent manner.

Everyone has a right to decent healthcare. Leaving one population vulnerable leaves everyone at heightened risk.

Our goal is to ensure a response within which all Lebanese and non-Lebanese in the country have equal access to information, testing and treatment.

After all, our response is about saving lives.

As you flip through the next pages of our COVID-19-centered brochure, I invite you to discover in facts and numbers how UNHCR contributed in the three-fold response in supporting refugees, making sure they stay healthy and safe, allowing them access to adequate medical care whenever needed.

Every facility we have put in place is available to all, regardless of nationality or status. COVID-19 does not discriminate between people, neither do we. We are also very concerned about the economic impact of COVID-19, particularly on the most vulnerable. We have mobilized to support them as much as possible at this trying time

and will continue to deploy all efforts to this end.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Lebanese and refugee volunteers for their relentless efforts alongside UNHCR and partners' teams. Now is the time to work together and join forces, so we leave no one behind.

UNHCR Representative in Lebanon
Mireille Girard

A 3-FOLD RESPONSE PLAN

What role is UNHCR playing in the fight against COVID-19 in Lebanon?

1 Prevention

Community engagement and awareness-raising

A high degree insight, solidarity and discipline is required to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 through strict personal hygiene, coughing etiquette, self-monitoring and social distancing measures. Community engagement is key in delaying and reducing further spread. Hand in hand with UNICEF, UNHCR actively engaged in awareness campaigns among refugees in Lebanon through all communication channels. In addition, UNHCR is mobilizing and training refugee volunteers and frontline staff on COVID-19, as well refugees with medical background to support the communities. Hygiene materials and kits including soap, sanitizer, bleach, are also distributed to all refugees living in overcrowded settings across Lebanon.



2 Containing Transmission

Isolation procedures in overcrowded settings

UNHCR is working with the concerned authorities, WHO and other organizations on contingency planning and has stepped up measures and guidance for self-isolation and containment for any case that might be detected within the refugee community. UNHCR is therefore supporting the establishment of dedicated isolation shelters within the areas where tented settlements exist, as well as at the municipal level when needed, by identifying vacant buildings and setting up all necessary equipment. In addition, alongside humanitarian partners, UNHCR is also engaged in the supervision of these facilities and provides the required personal protective equipment (PPEs) for the frontline staff and caretakers. These facilities are open to all persons in need, regardless of nationality or status.

3 Treatment & Case Management

UNHCR supports the expansion of the health sector's existing capacity at both the testing and the hospitalization levels to ensure refugees have access to services when needed and that all COVID-19 infected persons requiring hospitalization can be given treatment in a timely manner without creating competition for care.

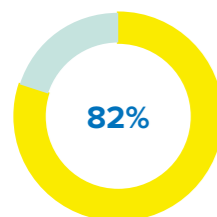


Step 1 PREVENTION

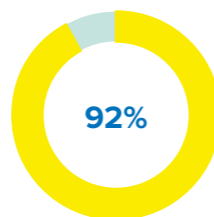
Community Engagement & Awareness-Raising

Our team works around the clock to capacitate and empower refugees in order to prevent infection and transmission within their families and the community.

Refugees Awareness



Know preventative measures to protect against COVID-19



Would call the Ministry of Public Health or approach a PHC if a family member had symptoms

Communicating with Communities

100% of refugees known to UNHCR were reached through all social media platforms with information on:

- COVID-19 symptoms and transmission
- Hygiene awareness and prevention methods
- Diagnostic and treatment procedures
- Government instructions on movements and curfew
- Self-isolation procedures

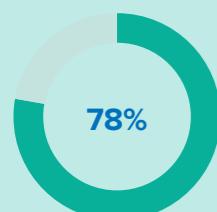
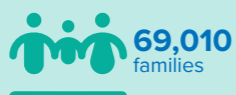
142,476 calls related to COVID-19 assistance responded to by the Call Center - The joint UNHCR/WFP call center since the beginning of March 2020.

Awareness Sessions, Hygiene Kits Distributions and Community Engagement

Humanitarian agencies conducted hygiene promotion and awareness sessions as well as hygiene kits distribution in informal tented settlements, and other similar sites reaching all individuals living in such overcrowded conditions. Dividing work, UNICEF focused on tented settlements and UNHCR on collective shelters.



of the population living in informal settlements reached



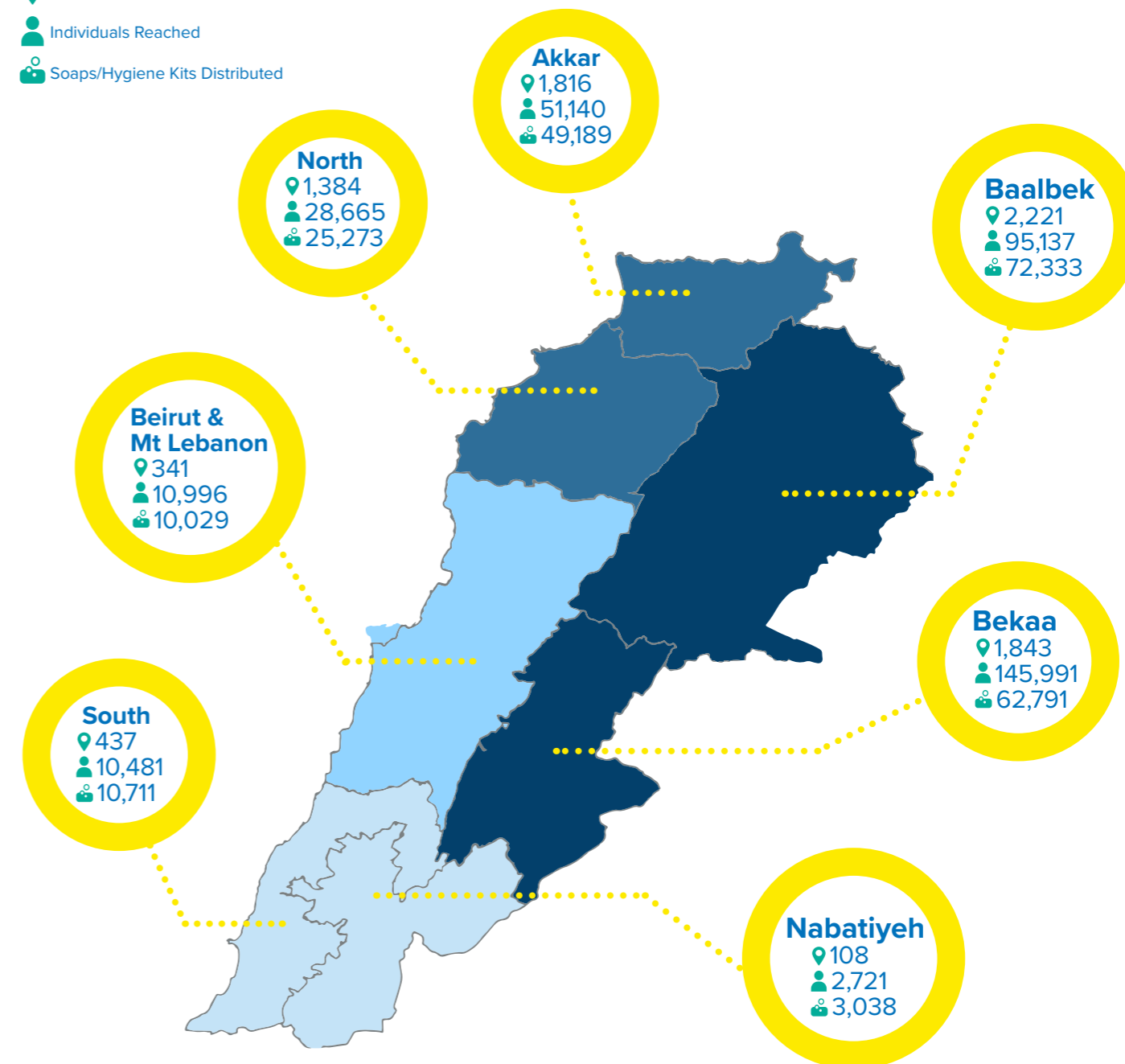
of the refugee population, living in private accommodation targeted



More than **5,000 masks** and **6,000 soap bars** produced by refugees and distributed to refugee and host communities.

DISTRIBUTION MAP

- Sites Reached
- Individuals Reached
- Soaps/Hygiene Kits Distributed



Governorate	Coverage
NORTH	100%
AKKAR	100%
BEIRUT & MOUNT LEBANON	100%
SOUTH	100%
BAALBEK - EL HERMEL	100%
BEKAA	100%
NABATIYEH	99%



Scan the QR code to learn more about the PCR Testing Campaign

Step 2

CONTAINING TRANSMISSION

Isolation procedures in overcrowded settings

We are setting up and supporting isolation facilities as well as providing related guidance in over-crowded settings where people might not have the possibility to isolate.

Guidance on Isolation

Standard Operating Procedures on isolation and quarantining of refugees confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19 finalized in compliance with national guidelines.

User Guide for refugees on the isolation and quarantining procedures shared with all refugees known to UNHCR and humanitarian partners providing support.

Terms of reference for site management finalized in compliance with national guidelines and through a consultative process outlining the administrative, management and service delivery accountabilities and responsibilities for Level 3 isolation facilities.



Supporting Communities' Capacities to Isolate

Capacity of **10,000** contingency shelter kits ready to be deployed within hours to support L1, L2 and L4 isolation situations.

More than **450** refugees with medical background mobilized and trained on isolation procedures.

1,759 site community groups of 3 to 5 refugee volunteers established across the country to play an active role on isolation procedures.

Rapid Response Teams of humanitarian partners established and mobilized in **1,315** out of 1,612 cadasters, ready to support on isolation procedures.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) procured for all UNHCR staff, health workers and Rapid Response Team members.

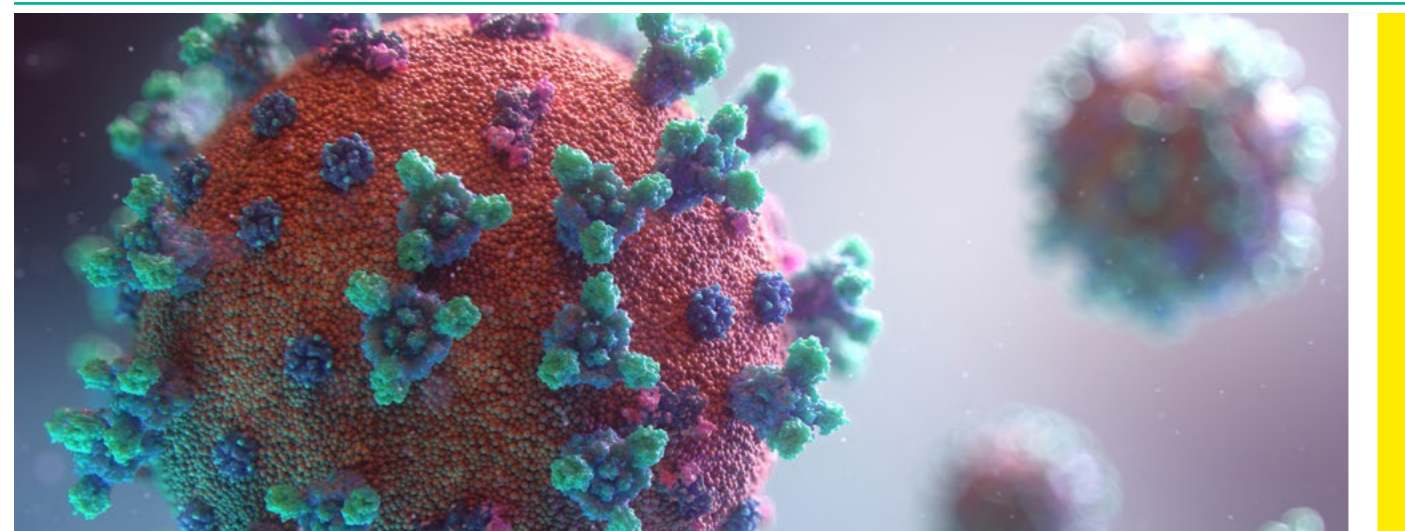
Distribution of food/hygiene parcels with humanitarian partners, targeting **10,000** vulnerable families.

Additional contribution to cover 3 months of cash assistance targeting **11,500** vulnerable refugee families to help them cope with the emergency situation.

Support Sample Testing in Overcrowded Settings

In collaboration with WHO, AMEL and IOCC, UNHCR facilitated sample COVID-19 testing for refugees living in overcrowded settings together with MoPH at a planned rate of **200** PCR tests per day and over a period of 5 weeks between May and June.

147 sites covered across the country
3,599 samples collected
3,599 results received, all negative



MAP OF SUPPORT FOR ISOLATION CAPACITIES

22%

of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in informal settlements and collective shelters

4

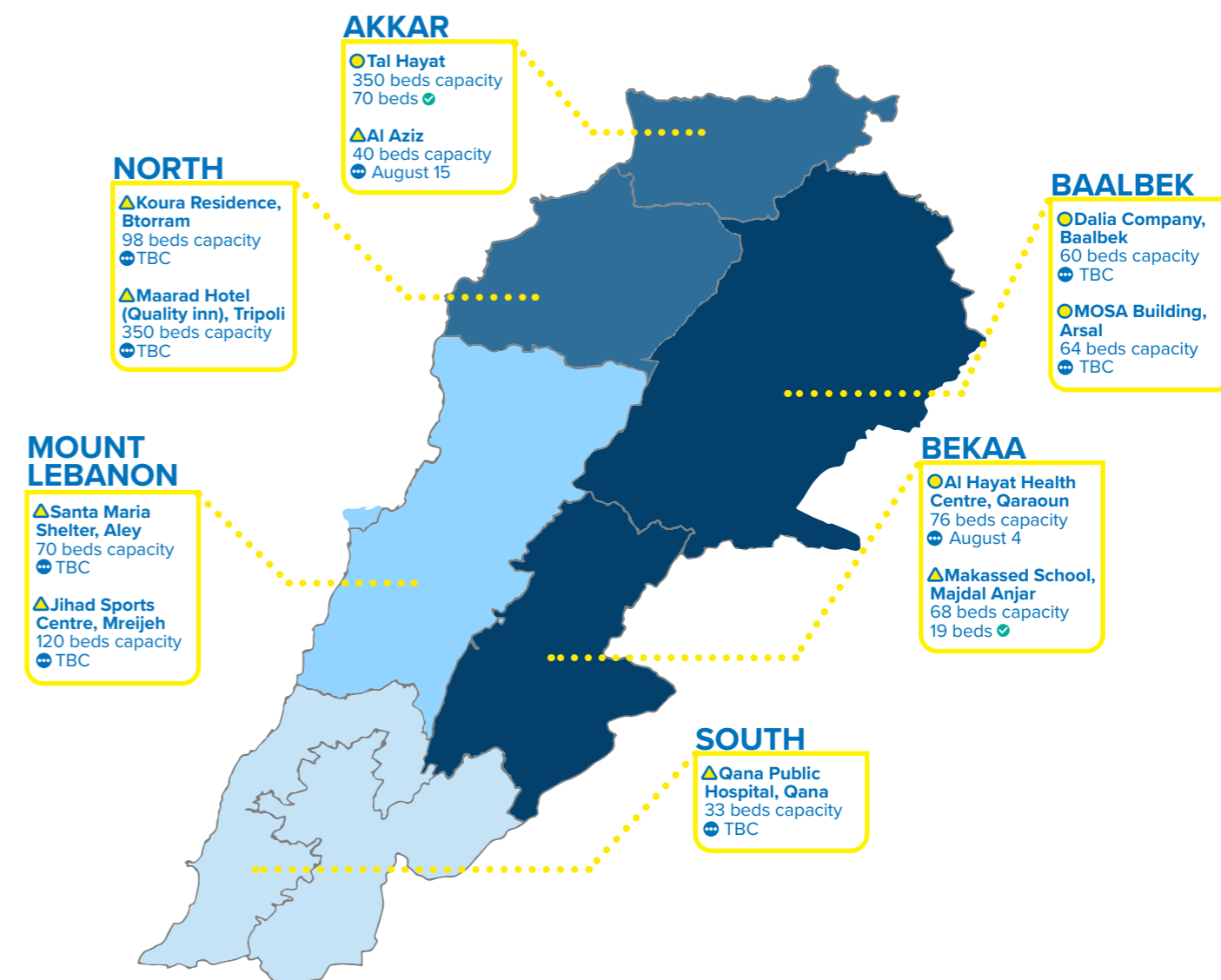
isolation centres being set up in refugee hosting areas

7

municipal isolation centres supported by UNHCR in North, South, Bekaa and Mount Lebanon

2

sites ready for use with a capacity of **89 beds**



The sites showed on the map are available to all persons in need regardless of nationality or status.

467 sites assessed for L2 isolation capacities
211 suitable sites retained

- Operational by
- Operational
- Isolation centre
- Municipal isolation centre




Scan the QR code to watch our video on Isolation Centres in Lebanon

*Any prefabricated, rubhalls or additional structures established will be dismantled when no longer required for isolation within the national COVID-19 response.

Step 3 TREATMENT AND CASE MANAGEMENT

We are expanding and rehabilitating the capacity of 6 public hospitals to receive and treat COVID-19 patients and avoid competition for care. Care is accessible to all patients regardless of nationality.

Projection

 A target of **800** additional hospital beds and **100** additional ICU beds across Lebanon distributed over 3 phases.

 Priority phase 1 targeted **6** governmental hospitals in Tripoli, Halba, Baalbek, Beirut, Saida and Zahle.

 Zahle Governmental Hospital is now approved for an additional **60** hospital beds and **10** ICU beds in phase 1.

Progress



A first phase of expansion works is completed in Baalbek, Halba and Tripoli governmental hospitals. The delivery and installation of medical equipment (including ventilators, patient beds, emergency trolleys, and other medical furniture) started early July in the completed expanded structures.



In Beirut, the rehabilitation of a **72-bed** capacity ward in RHUH is also completed and operational and in Saida Governmental hospital, rehabilitation work is ongoing to increase hosting capacity of the COVID-19 section.



Medicine stock for over **22,000** COVID-19 patients and **30** ventilators received in country, as part of medical items procured by UNHCR for the response. As second batch of **25** ventilators to arrive in country of 27 July. **100** ICU beds and **800** hospital beds received in country and being dispatched in phases.


UNHCR will cover 100% of test and treatment for refugee patients.


Expansion of the MoPH COVID-19 Hotline

 Expansion of the MoPH COVID-19 hotline capacity to take up to **4,500** calls/ day, with 10 additional trained nurses mobilized by AMEL Association to serve as operators and a referral system for refugees calling to be immediately transferred to UNHCR for action.

Support to Hospitals Network

UNHCR is expanding hospital capacity to benefit COVID-19 patients from both refugee and Lebanese communities, through:

 The design, construction and equipment of temporary COVID-19 units annexed to selected hospitals, or rehabilitation of existing unused structure within hospitals to be COVID-19 units.

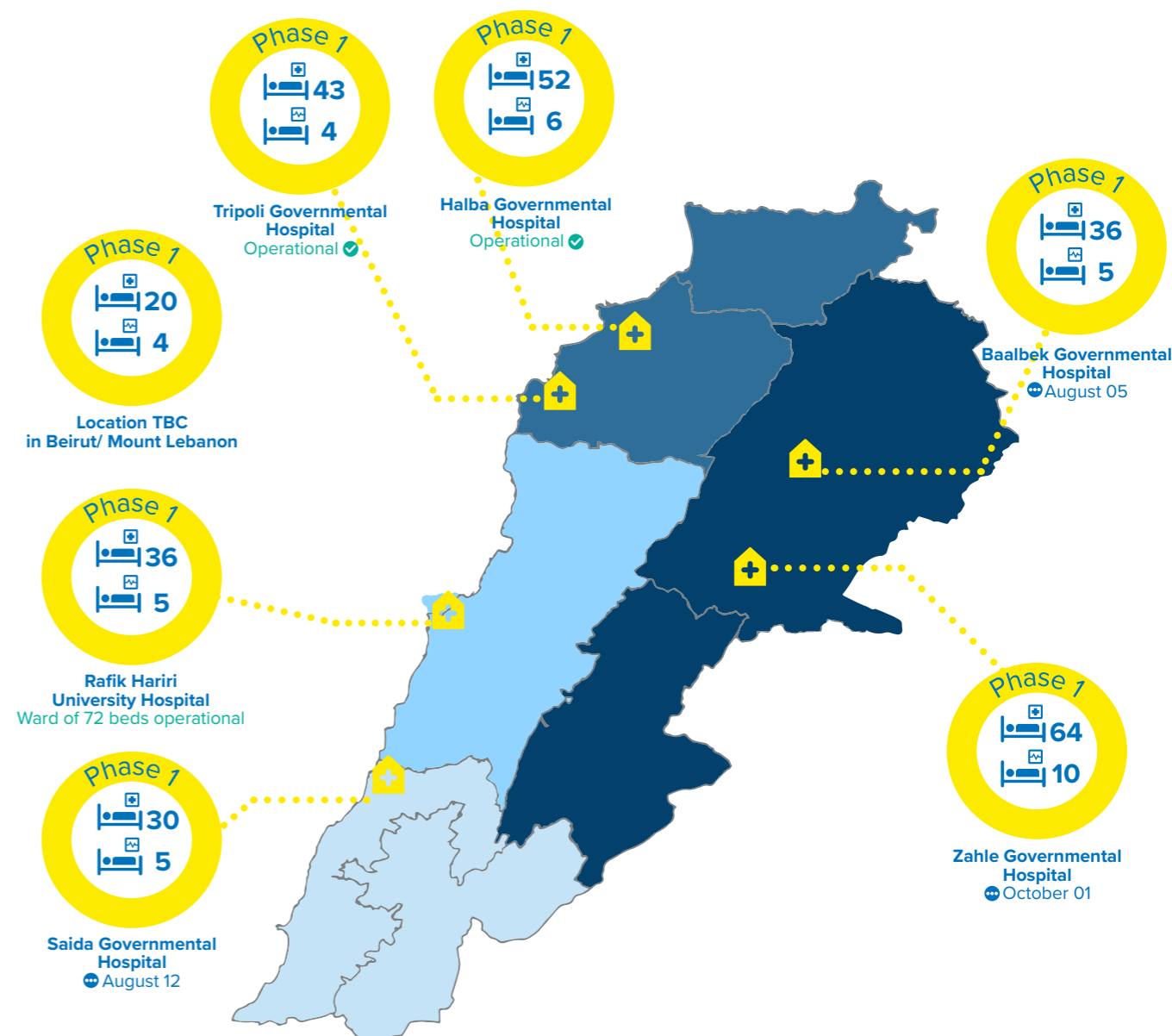
 Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs), renewable medical supplies and medicines to enable them to manage COVID-19 cases.

PLANNED HOSPITAL EXPANSION PHASE 1

 **6** Governmental Hospitals

 **281** Additional Hospital Beds





 **39** Additional ICU Beds



Total target over 3 phases

800 Additional hospital beds

100 Additional ICU beds

 Hospital bed
 ICU bed
 Operational by
 Operational



Scan the QR code to watch our video on hospital expansion across Lebanon

STORIES FROM THE FIELD & BEYOND

MIDIA'S STORY



During the COVID-19 lockdown, Midia made homemade soap for her community. She learned the craft online under lockdown through a virtual course funded by UNHCR.

"I learned how to make medical soaps, how to make it with Turmeric, how to make it with fennel seeds, we learned about dyeing the soap with colour, how to make it look nice", says Midia who is using all-natural ingredients.

She is one of many Syrian refugee women who enthusiastically joined the course to contribute in their own way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

What is the biggest take-away from this experience? Midia tells us it's about how we use our skills to actively help our community stay safe and healthy while supporting our family now and in the future.



Scan this QR code to watch Midia's video

HANDMADE MASKS FOR ALL

"Sewing is an art by itself", says Zeinab, a Lebanese woman who is learning motivation in making masks alongside other volunteers as they combat COVID-19. The masks will be distributed for free to those who need them.



Scan this QR to watch the video

IT'S ABOUT SAVING LIVES!



"This campaign is about saving lives. In deeply uncertain times resulting from the COVID-19 emergency and the economic downturn the country is struggling with, only by joining hands can we mitigate the hardship for those most in need among refugees and Lebanese communities and ensure that no one is left behind."

In these words, UNHCR Representative in Lebanon Mireille Girard describes the purpose behind the Together We Give Hope campaign that was launched by UNHCR and its partners in April.

The nationwide solidarity campaign reached thousands of vulnerable Lebanese and refugee families in various Lebanese regions and provided lifesaving and essential food items and hygiene kits to help families in need cope during this difficult period in Lebanon.

A CRUCIAL LIFELINE FOR THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES

Refugees are becoming more vulnerable due to the dire economic crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak. The double crises the country is facing have aggravated unemployment and competition over resources. In this context, cash assistance has become a crucial lifeline for thousands of refugees who have found themselves increasingly dependent on humanitarian assistance.

Therefore, in addition to the 34,500 severely vulnerable refugee families that UNHCR supports with monthly multi-purpose cash assistance, UNHCR is helping additional refugee families with temporary cash assistance to help them make ends meet in these most challenging economic conditions. In May, June and July, 11,500 additional refugee families are being supported, and UNHCR is continuously advocating for an expansion of this lifesaving support to help as many families as possible in these difficult times.

800 BEDS, 100 ICU BEDS

These are the medical equipment and related hospital items that UNHCR brought into the country to support 6 governmental hospitals and expand their capacity to accommodate more COVID-19 patients, regardless of nationality.

From Beirut to Saida, Tripoli to Halba, Baalbek and Zahle, UNHCR is supporting the nationwide fight against the spread of COVID-19.

Since February, UNHCR teams deployed relentless efforts to build dedicated hospital expansion facilities and rehabilitate already existing sections, and refurbishing them with the new medical equipment. The latter will remain the property of the hospitals after the pandemic, so that they can help cure many more diseases after COVID-19.

"We've worked day and night to make this happen. For us, it was a priority" says Muntasir Siddig who leads UNHCR's supply team.



KEEPING THE LINES OPEN



With most face-to-face humanitarian programmes put on hold during Lebanon's lockdown period, UNHCR immediately strengthened capacity at the already existing call center to ensure it can respond to increased demand from refugees at a time of heightened anxiety. This call center is run jointly by UNHCR and the World Food Programme.



3,500+

Syrian refugees were tested for COVID-19 in the Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, Beirut, the South and the North over a 2-week national PCR campaign initiated by UNHCR and our partners under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Health and WHO.

UNHCR Lebanon is grateful for the critical support of its donors, including to our COVID-19 response, in 2020:



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