

INTER-AGENCY REGIONAL RESPONSE FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey

24 - 31 October 2013



This update provides a snapshot of the inter-agency regional humanitarian response in full coordination with host Governments and 126 partners across the region. Published weekly on Thursday, the next update will be available on 7 November 2013.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Activities to prepare for the onset of winter are underway across the region. Regional Response Plan (RRP) partners are coordinating to distribute relief items such as blankets and fuel for heating, and weatherproofing shelters amongst other initiatives. Assistance will target 100 per cent of Syrian refugees living in camps and over 700,000 of the most vulnerable Syrians in urban and rural communities.
- Access to territory remains restricted for Syrians seeking refuge in Iraq. The Kurdistan Regional Government, currently hosting over 95 per cent of Syrian refugees in Iraq, remain concerned about security situation and border restrictions are ongoing. The Al Qa'im border point remains closed since 29 March 2013.
- Turkey will permit qualified Syrian teachers, doctors and pharmacists to work in camps on a voluntary basis under the supervision of camp officials and the Ministries of Education and Health.
- UNRWA has registered 9,657 Palestinian refugees from Syria for assistance in Jordan and 49,000 in Lebanon. UNRWA is also tracking reports of over 7,000 Palestinian refugees who have fled Syria to North Africa and Turkey.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Addressing protection priorities across the region, p.2
- CARE: supporting Syrian refugees in urban areas in Jordan and Lebanon, p.2
- Fostering peaceful co-existence between refugee and host communities, p.3
- Handicap International: Regional response to the Syria crisis, p.3
- Spontaneous returns to Syria ongoing as monitoring of the voluntariness of movement continues, p.4

REGIONAL FIGURES

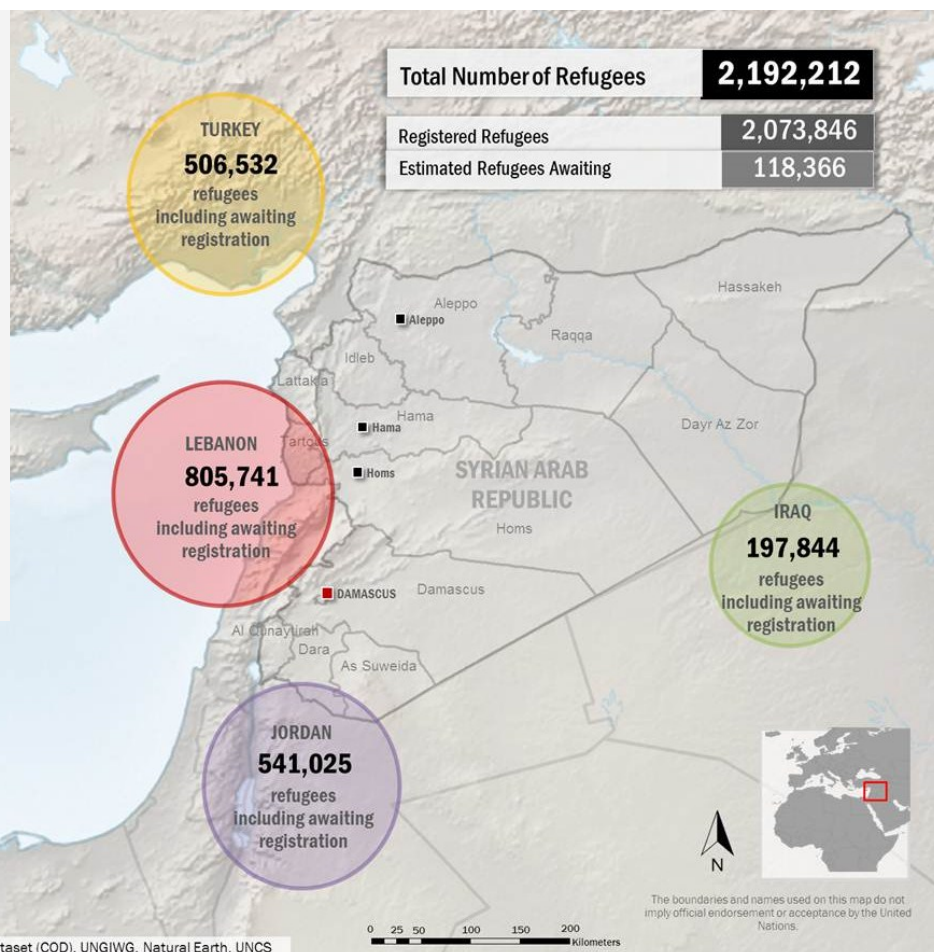
2.1 million refugees fleeing Syria have sought protection in neighbouring countries

80% of Syrian refugees are living outside camps in urban settings amongst host communities across the region

1.1 million Syrian refugees are receiving food assistance*

62% of funding received for the Syria Regional Response Plan January to December 2013

* UNICEF, WFP



Addressing protection priorities in the region

Lebanon: Newborn refugees at risk of statelessness

- UNHCR has registered over 8,000 Syrian refugees born in Lebanon since March 2011. A recent survey of 781 newborns found that only 23 per cent have registered birth certificates. Those children whose births have not been registered are at an increased risk of statelessness. In response, UNHCR and partners continue to provide information counseling and legal assistance to hundreds of expecting parents and parents with newborns each week.

Jordan: Community outreach mechanisms enhanced to serve urban refugees and host communities

- Over 80 per cent of Syrian refugees in Jordan are hosted in urban and rural communities. The expansion of the inter-agency protection outreach network has been identified as one of the key protection priorities. As of September 2013, three Community Centres and six Community Action Committees (CACs) were established in Amman, the North and the South to promote community outreach and empowerment activities, with the objective of serving 50 per cent Syrians and 50 per cent Jordanians in host communities. A fifth UNHCR Help Desk was established in Karak in October and two new Help Desks are planned for Tafileh and Aqaba. In addition, more than 950 Syrian refugees and Jordanians volunteer in 99 community-based child protection committees (53 in camps and 46 in host communities), implemented by UNICEF and its partners.

Iraq: Child protection mechanisms enhanced

- Activities in Child- and Youth-Friendly Spaces (CFS and YFS) in Al Qa'im are continuing. Social workers are conducting awareness sessions on personal hygiene, the importance of education, and the risk of smoking. In Domiz camp, social workers in UNICEF-supported safe spaces conducted group discussions with 156 children on the understanding of sexual violence. A newly-established Child Help Line (CHL) is due to begin operations in early November. It is anticipated that this intervention would help understand the magnitude of the sexual violence problem as survivors can call the service anonymously. CHL staff are working with other child protection partners to understand the context and establish networks for future case referrals.



Syrian refugees being registered in the Kurdistan Region, north Iraq. UNHCR

Egypt: Scaling up border and detention monitoring

- Border and detention monitoring has taken place regularly, including outside of Cairo. Advocacy efforts by UNHCR and operational partners aimed at maintaining the protection space have increased with the Government. The provision of legal aid has been maintained in Cairo and established in Alexandria. Community protection networks were expanded and trained in order to quickly identify protection risks including refugees in arbitrary detention both in and outside Greater Cairo.

CARE: supporting Syrian refugees in urban areas in Jordan and Lebanon

- Jordan - More than three quarters of the Syrian refugee population in Jordan live with host families or rented apartments in urban areas. CARE set up refugee centres in East Amman, Zarqa, Irbid and Mafraq. CARE staff and volunteers, some of whom are refugees themselves, provide cash assistance to pay for basic living costs, including rent, food and essential relief items and assist with vital information on how refugees can access further health care and social support. CARE is also supporting Syrian refugees with psychosocial activities. To date, CARE has reached about 150,000 refugees from Syria in Jordan.
- Lebanon - CARE's programme aims to meet the most basic and pressing needs of refugees through the provision of shelter, water and sanitation. CARE has increased access to water and sanitation for people in Beirut through repairing of infrastructure and is starting similar activities in the Mount Lebanon area and Tripoli, including improving drainage systems, distributing of sanitary items, and providing health education sessions.
- In the coming weeks, CARE will help refugee families in Lebanon and Jordan to cope during the winter through the distribution of cash as well as heaters, blankets and fuel refills. CARE also works with vulnerable host families to address the needs of host communities in Jordan and Lebanon who have been severely impacted by rising accommodation and living costs.

Fostering peaceful co-existence between refugee and host communities

- Tensions between refugee and host communities are reportedly increasing. There is a need to increase support to national institutions and communities hosting refugee populations. Humanitarian partners are planning and implementing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and Community Support Projects (CSPs) to foster peaceful coexistence and sustain or improve the overall protection environment for Syrian refugees.
- Through community participation, QIPs and CSPs provide for small-scale initial rehabilitation and enable communities to take advantage of development opportunities and strengthens the absorptive capacity of communities hosting large numbers of refugees, while meeting urgent community needs.
- More than 350 QIPs and CSPs have been completed or are in process in Lebanon and Jordan.
- Egypt - In view of the deteriorating protection environment for Syrian refugees in Egypt, UNHCR and its partners are looking at developing QIPs in collaboration with Egyptian municipalities, local and international NGOs, and refugee and host communities. The QIPs will aim to address the existing lack of services in deprived communities with a high concentration of refugees and are intended to improve the absorptive capacity of hosting areas. The projects will be rapid, low-cost interventions and will involve community participation and collaboration with local authorities to achieve these goals while also generating new development opportunities for beneficiaries.
- Lebanon - Two dozen Syrian and Lebanese youths participated in UNHCR and Right to Play's "Basketball for Development" training in Beirut and Akkar this week. These new coaches will in turn train over 1,200 individuals and organize sporting activities. The project aims to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between refugees and local communities through sports.
- Jordan - Eighty projects to promote peaceful co-existence between refugees and host populations (65 QIPs and 15 CSPs) were completed as of the end of September 2013.

Handicap International: Regional response to the Syria crisis

- Handicap International's Emergency Response Division for the Syrian refugee crisis has been working in Jordan and Lebanon since May 2012. Initial intervention were aimed at supporting persons with injuries and other extremely vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and older persons, through community outreach and collaboration with community representatives, local authorities and implementing partners.
- Jordan - Present since May 2012, Handicap International (HI) operates in the governorates of Irbid, Amman, Mafraq and Zarqa. Disability and Vulnerability Focal Points (DVFP), through fixed points and mobile teams, are operational in the cities of Irbid, Mafraq, Zarqa and in Za'atri camp. Three hospitals in Amman are also supported. By the end of August, HI has cumulatively provided care, items and services to 4,000 beneficiaries (20,400 including family members). Newly launched cash assistance activities aim to benefit at least 500 families (2,500 individuals) during the pilot phase, with plans to scale up significantly thereafter.
- Lebanon - Through a variety of complimentary interventions, HI has provided a portfolio of care for the most vulnerable refugee and host community populations across the Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon. Activities include DVFP activities through 20 mobile teams, provision of rehabilitation and psychosocial care, coverage of urgent basic needs and training and advocacy for inclusion.
- In addition, HI and HelpAge International have partnered to conduct wide-scale research through Jordan and Lebanon, aiming to fill the extensive information gaps with respect to data availability in the realm of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with injuries in the Syria context.



Handicap International | B. Blondel

Spontaneous returns to Syria ongoing as monitoring of the voluntariness of movement continues

- Jordan - Syrians continue to opt for spontaneous return to Syria, with more than 85,000 Syrians having returned from Jordan by the end of September 2013 according to Government of Jordan figures. The return process remains administered by the Government through the Syrian Refugee Camp Directorate in Za’atri, as well as the General Intelligence Department and the Military Intelligence. UNHCR has established a daily return monitoring mechanism to provide counseling to refugees on the risks associated with return to Syria and assess the voluntariness of the movement and motivations of those returning. A more systematic individual tracking and monitoring procedure for Za’atri and Rabaa Al-Sarhan is being discussed by UNHCR and Government authorities to fully understand factors informing decisions to return, and address concerns through an adapted assistance and protection framework, including a systematic mechanism to prevent the recruitment of children into armed forces and their return to Syria. At present, UNHCR regularly shares lists of unaccompanied and separated minors with the Government as a measure to prevent the return of children at risk to Syria.
- Iraq - More than 21,000 registered Syrian refugees from the Kurdistan Region have returned to Syria since January 2013, along with some 15,547 unregistered Syrians who have elected to leave the Kurdistan Region so far in 2013 to go back to Syria. In addition, 1,297 cases (6,039 individuals) have returned to Syria from the Al Qa’im border point, bringing the total number of Syrian refugee returns from Iraq to over forty thousand people.



Humanitarian response partners are invited to contribute to this report. For more information or to be added to the distribution list, please contact **Anna King**, UNHCR Regional Reporting Officer | kinga@unhcr.org