

UNHCR LEBANON

AN UPDATE FROM UNHCR ON THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19

It's been a very busy time, working to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the population,

including the refugees who live in overcrowded shelters where it is difficult to maintain social distancing, and contain the transmission of infections, and ensure access to testing and treatment for all in need. UNHCR has since the start been supporting the National COVID-19 Response, led by the Government, in these public health efforts.

Fortunately, only one refugee, living in an apartment in an urban setting, has so far been tested positive for COVID-19. In our strive to prevent infection among the refugees, we continue mass-disseminating information about the precautionary hygiene and social distancing measures and will help facilitate sample PCR testing in informal settlements as of next week.

As in other countries around the world, the COVID-19 situation is also having a profound impact on the socio-economic and mental health situation of the population, notably vulnerable Lebanese, many of whom were already affected by the deep economic crisis, and refugees as well as migrant workers.

This is the last thing Lebanon, in the midst of a deep economic crisis, needed and the overall situation in the country is worrying.

On the following page are a number of Infographics, dashboards and updates on UNHCR's contribution to the national COVID response that have been issued over the past weeks.

Click to view UNHCR updates

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Lebanon
16 May 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

Key developments

As of 16 May, one person of concern to UNHCR Lebanon has tested positive for COVID-19 (as per previous updates). Following a period of self-isolation at home, he has recovered from the virus.

UNHCR continues preparing for a gradual resumption of activities suspended since mid-March (please see table below on the status of UNHCR Lebanon's regular programmes), and an incremental return of staff to the office, in line with the Government's deconfinement plan and UN guidance. Interviewing rooms in the four Reception Centres are being equipped with plexiglass and the reception area with partitions to facilitate social distancing. Planning for the resumption of activities in UNHCR-supported Community Development Centres is also underway. The prioritisation of activities, scale and timeliness will, however, remain dependent on the national advice and any further lockdowns like the current one from 14-17 May.

Final approval was granted to UNHCR for 8 of the 24 suggested isolation sites nearby refugee settlements (2 in Akkar, 4 in the Bekaa and 2 in Bsharri). In agreement with the National COVID Taskforce, UNHCR is proceeding with the preparation of 4 sites as a first phase. Expansion works at three public hospitals (Halba, Tripoli - pictured below, and Baalbek) also commenced this week, but have been placed on hold during the four-day lockdown.



National testing campaign

In coordination with WHO, UNHCR is preparing to facilitate COVID-19 testing for refugees living in overcrowded settings together with the MoPH and partners, as part of the national efforts to expand PCR testing. An information campaign planned in consultation with community health volunteers and community groups in informal settlements will commence next week, following the four-day lockdown. The testing will start after Eid al-Fitr and target 1.5% of the population in informal settlements and collective shelters, based on the national sampling (15,000 per 1 Million).

Humanitarian needs growing

UNHCR's latest protection monitoring findings underline that the socio-economic situation of refugees continues to deteriorate, with 77% reporting that they have difficulties buying food and 70% that

Key Figures

- 3,453 refugee volunteers and 650 UNHCR and partner frontline staff trained on COVID-19 awareness.
- More than 450 refugees with medical background mobilised as Community Health Volunteers.
- Site community groups to support isolation procedures established in 1,226 informal settlements so far.
- 301,000 refugees in overcrowded settings reached with hygiene promotion and materials.
- 10,000 shelter kits in stock for Level 2 isolation in informal settlements.
- Eight Level 3 isolation facilities identified by UNHCR approved for preparation.
- MoPH COVID-19 hotline capacity expanded with 10 additional operators (trained nurses) and technical equipment.
- Expansion works at three public hospitals have commenced.
- Medical equipment for 400 additional hospital beds and 100 additional ICUs ordered and reaching the country in batches.

FINANCED US\$ A DAY

USD 535.4 million
requested for the COVID-19 situation



UNHCR

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Lebanon
30 March 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

Key developments

Since the first COVID-19 case was detected in Lebanon on 22 February and as of 29 March, there are no confirmed reports of refugees in Lebanon having tested positive for COVID-19.

In the collective efforts to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 in Lebanon and not to overburden the hospital and ICU capacity, restrictions on the operation of institutions, businesses, and movements of persons have gradually been introduced. The Lebanese Government declared a state of public health emergency on 15 March and circulars and decisions containing specific measures have been issued by central and local authorities. Refugees have been informed through SMS and other communication channels and are limiting their movements.

The situation is having a severe impact on refugees' mental health, access to livelihoods, ATMs and consequent ability to meet basic survival needs like rent, food and medicines, education, child protection, and risk of SGBV, as is for many Lebanese and other residents. Many also fear being stigmatised if they are infected, and that intercommunal tensions may rise further. Refugees highlight the urgent need for assistance (cash to cover rent and in-kind, particularly food), and hygiene and sterilization items.

UNHCR is working within the national response to ensure that refugees have timely information about the precautionary measures to prevent infection spread, and access to MoPH screening of COVID-19 symptoms as well as free testing and any care required, without additional strain on the already stretched health care system.

A number of regular programs have been suspended or significantly adapted due to the lockdown and, wherever possible, staff and financial resources repositioned to support the COVID-19 emergency response. Nonetheless, some additional needs cannot be covered through reallocation, but require new funding.

Funding requirements

More than \$30 million is required to cover additional needs in the COVID-19 response:

- Expand Ministry of Public Health hotline capacity;
- Procure thermometers for detection; hygiene materials for equipment; and Personal Protection Equipment for frontline responders;
- Establish isolation/quarantining shelters (individual, community and municipal level) for 5,800 persons;
- Increase hospital bed capacity by 600 and intensive care units by 100; and
- Cover 1,200 diagnostic tests and intensive care treatment for 180 refugees.

UNHCR's programme in 2020 also requires \$55 million to comprehensively cover COVID-19 (non-intensive care) and non-COVID-related (including deliveries and surgeries) secondary health care needs of Syrian and refugees of other nationalities.

Impact on regular activities

| Activity | Status (with changes/adaptations to program indicated) |
|--|---|
| Individual case management (e.g. SGBV, child protection, PHSS, legal advice) | Maintained; conducted by phone wherever possible with in-person counselling limited to exceptional cases |
| Border monitoring | Suspended since 23 March following restrictions on movement restrictions, and border closure |
| Health, shelter, and WASH interventions | Maintained and expanded: full coverage of PCR tests for COVID-19 for refugees and any treatment prescribed plus reinforcement of hospitalisation and ICU capacity, expanded shelter and WASH interventions to support isolation/quarantining of refugees with mild symptoms |
| Cash programmes | Maintained with some modifications: assessments for protection and emergency cash largely done by phone, multi-purpose cash transfers |

UNHCR

UNHCR May 2020 Report: Covid-19 Update

UNHCR March 2020 Report: Covid-19 Update

COVID-19 RESPONSE IN REFUGEE SETTINGS - APRIL 2020

STEP 1: PREVENTION: Community Engagement & Awareness Raising

COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES

100% of refugees known to UNHCR were reached with information on COVID-19 prevention and awareness raising.

AWARENESS SESSIONS AND HYGIENE KITS DISTRIBUTIONS

500% of the population living in informal settlements reached

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING

Community Engagement and Training

650 staff trained on COVID-19 awareness raising

32 community health volunteers trained

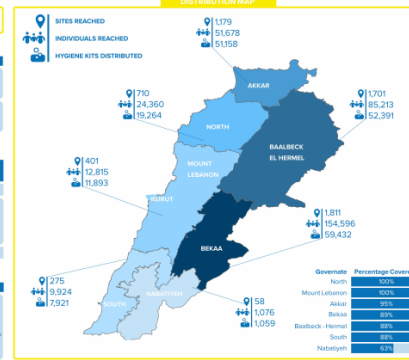
3453 refugees reached with awareness raising

1254 hygiene kits distributed

450 refugees reached with awareness raising

DISTRIBUTION MAP

SITES REACHED: INDIVIDUALS REACHED: HYGIENE KITS DISTRIBUTED



North: 1,179 individuals reached, 15,178 hygiene kits distributed, 100% coverage

Mount Lebanon: 170 individuals reached, 24,350 hygiene kits distributed, 100% coverage

Akkar: 1,701 individuals reached, 15,213 hygiene kits distributed, 100% coverage

Bekaa: 401 individuals reached, 12,815 hygiene kits distributed, 100% coverage

Nabatiyyeh: 58 individuals reached, 1,076 hygiene kits distributed, 95% coverage

South: 1,811 individuals reached, 15,432 hygiene kits distributed, 95% coverage

Government: 9,275 individuals reached, 9,275 hygiene kits distributed, 95% coverage

UNHCR Covid-19 Response 3-Step Plan

COVID-19 RESPONSE IN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

STEP 1: PREVENTION: Community Engagement & Awareness Raising

100% awareness implementation of COVID-19 prevention measures

STEP 2: CONTAINING TRANSMISSION: Reduction of movements and isolation procedures in overcrowded settings

Provide clear guidance and support to refugees population for improved COVID-19 home isolation & treatment

Shelter and WASH teams assist communities and families in ensuring timely self-isolation and provide needed equipment, access to water and food

Through its refugee communication platform, UNHCR informs the refugees about guidance on home isolation and provides training for caretakers

STEP 3: TREATMENT & CASE MANAGEMENT

Support to refugees population for improved COVID-19 detection and treatment

Supporting the expansion of existing capacity for hospitalisation and intensive care to ensure that COVID-19 infected persons in need can be given treatment, and avoid competition for care

Support to public and private health service delivery in the COVID-19 response

Establish social assist facilities to treat and manage population of the most vulnerable or isolated, including additional beds and essential equipment

Provide additional equipment

UNHCR will cover 50% of bed and treatment for refugee patients

UNHCR Covid-19 Response in Refugee Communities

