



A young girl stands in the snow outside her tent in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley | © UNHCR/Houssam Hariri

## LEBANON

Lebanon, with the highest number of refugees per capita worldwide, is facing its worst socioeconomic crisis in decades, and reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut blast in 2020. Half of the Lebanese population is estimated to be below the poverty line, and 90% of the government-estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees in the country, most of them children, need humanitarian assistance to survive.

There are gaps in critical supply chains and limitations on access to food, healthcare, education and other basic services. Faced with hyperinflation, subsidy removals and socioeconomic deterioration, refugees are taking on increasing levels of debt to meet their basic needs, while spiraling costs force refugee families to make difficult choices to survive every single day, including skipping meals, not seeking urgent medical treatment, and sending children to work instead of school. The strain on refugees' mental health has generated an increasing number of suicide-related calls and reports of attempts at self-harm. Refugees are increasingly turning to irregular onward movements, including dangerous boat journeys across the Mediterranean.

Shelter conditions are substandard, with overcrowding, lack of privacy, safety, and access

to basic needs including water, sanitation, electricity, and heating. Public services have declined significantly with many at risk of collapse. Municipalities are also affected and are under increasing pressure but unable to provide basic services due to a lack of funding. Competition between Lebanese and refugee communities over resources is likely to increase, which risks escalating tensions and fueling anti-refugee rhetoric.

UNHCR works closely with the Government in providing protection and assistance to refugees, host communities and stateless persons. UNHCR's strategy focuses on preserving the protection space, ensuring dignified stay, enhancing social cohesion and enabling protection-driven solutions, including improving access to resettlement and/or complementary pathways to third countries and upholding the right to voluntary return in safety and dignity.

Funding gaps encompass all areas of intervention for UNHCR in Lebanon, with dire consequences for the most vulnerable refugee families. If the funding situation does not improve soon, UNHCR is concerned that it will not be able to sufficiently support refugees in accessing their rights and meeting their most basic needs in Lebanon.



### POPULATION OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS PEOPLE AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

Overall: **817,126**

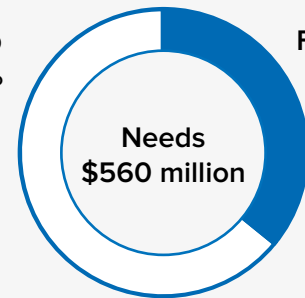
Largest population group: Syrian Refugees - **805,326** / **98%**



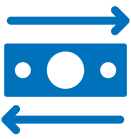
### FUNDING

Gap  
64%

Funded  
36%



## AREAS CUT OR SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED



**Cash assistance:** the number of families assisted with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) had to be reduced by 11% to 127,800 families from 2022 to 2023.

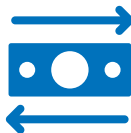


**Shelter:** UNHCR Lebanon had to decrease work on improvements in informal settlements by 7.5%. As a result, more refugees will be threatened by risks and other hazards related to winter and floods and their physical safety, protection and health will be compromised.



**Health:** underfunding has limited the coverage for payment of refugee patients eligible to receive life- and limb-saving services, including a reduction of obstetric care cost coverage from 75% to 50%.

## AREAS AT CRITICAL RISK AND IN NEED OF URGENT FUNDING



**Cash assistance - \$242.8 million:** some 16,200 families discontinued from MPCA will be at risk of being left without any other source of income for survival and forced to rely on debt or resort to even more harmful coping mechanisms.



**Shelter \$23.1 million:** in urban areas, UNHCR risks having to reduce the rehabilitation and repair of substandard buildings, while an increasing number of refugees are living in the most vulnerable neighbourhoods and substandard and overcrowded shelters, risking further deterioration of peaceful coexistence in these areas.



**Health - \$60.7 million:** underfunding will increase the burden on refugee families in a rapidly deteriorating socioeconomic environment where 41% of refugees already cannot afford any access to healthcare, as per the 2022 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Health Access and Utilization Survey (HAUS) results.

### GROWING CONCERNS/AREAS TO MONITOR

Harmful anti-refugee rhetoric may lead to further social tensions and instability, impacting the protection space. Efforts should focus on ensuring appropriate assistance and services to the most vulnerable.

**Funds available to the operation must reach 2021 levels of \$301.15 million, if not more.**