



As of date: 19 February 2021

The lives of 4,665 individuals across Lebanon have been impacted by storm Joyce that started on 16 February. Syrian households were particularly affected as 48 percent were already living in shelters either below humanitarian standards, overcrowded, or in degrading conditions. The cold temperatures, flooding and damages to informal settlements and structures not originally built for human habitation (collective shelters) required an immediate response by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the rapid response partners. Site assessments are ongoing in all regions and needs are expected to increase. The most affected areas include Akkar, Baalbek El Hermel and the Bekaa.

| |  Sites |  HH |  Individuals |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Affected | 256 | 809 | 4,665 |
| Assisted | 150 | 264 | 1,563 |

This response to the extreme weather conditions takes place in the context of a nation-wide lockdown with movement restrictions. Obtaining movement authorizations has been a major challenge for some partners, ready to respond, but unable to provide lifesaving support. This has led to a higher percentage of refugees being assisted in some regions compared to others. Immediate movement permits are required for partners providing these lifesaving interventions.

Preparedness measures were taken in all locations prior to the storm, including replenishing contingency stocks, refresher trainings on the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) tool and on the safe delivery of lifesaving interventions during COVID-19, and mass communication with communities, including key messages on how to protect oneself during the winter storms.

Impacts and response by region

North

Informal settlements and urban shelters in Akkar and T5 were most heavily impacted by the storm. RNA partners initially received referrals from 232 sites and 1,900 families. The RNA assessments started immediately and confirmed needs for 1,525 individuals in 113 of the 188 sites assessed to date. Three sites in Akkar and one site in T5 were entirely flooded. Families in these sites needed relocation, but the options remain limited; only two families were able to find temporary accommodation in empty shelters. The rest of the families decided not to relocate and stayed in the flooded sites. People who are less likely to be able to prevent and mitigate adverse weather conditions have been significantly impacted, including 735 children, 12 individuals with disabilities and 14 elderly persons with no support network. The residents of an informal resettlements reacted quickly and were able to save two children, aged 9 and 3 years, who were being swept away by rising water levels while sleeping in their tents.

The response in the North is ongoing, with 983 individuals of the 1,525 in need of assistance having received core relief items, including mattresses, blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets as well as shelter, hygiene, and baby kits, to date.



Flooded ITS in SMMOUNIEH – photo by SI

Bekaa

Snow started to fall in the Bekaa during the early hours of 17 February. Referrals were received from 92 informal settlements across various municipalities in central, west, and north Bekaa. Assessments by RNA partners started immediately whereby 53 of the sites and 1,752 individuals have been confirmed affected by water leakage and damage due to snow accumulation.

There is a total of 12 RNA partners who need to respond and provide lifesaving interventions to individuals impacted by extreme weather. Only two of them have been able to obtain permission to move through the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities platform. As a result, the assistance in the Bekaa has been limited to only 7 sites and 236 individuals, including distribution of blankets, mattresses, and shelter kits. One child at risk was also identified and referred for assistance to a specialized organization. Snow accumulation is also hampering assistance efforts.

Preparedness measures have included identifying partners who can provide surgical masks during an emergency and proactively calling by telephone all active COVID-19 cases to counsel them on the importance of adhering to precautionary measures in case of flood and/or snow accumulation.

South

Heavy rains and extreme winds in the South and Nabatieh have caused partial flooding and damage in informal settlements and urban areas. There are 65 sites and 1,000 individuals that have been identified by RNA partners as affected. Two sites and 29 individuals have been assisted to date. Suspected COVID-19 cases were identified in one settlement during the emergency response. The Rapid Response Teams for COVID-19 were activated and provided an immediate response, and a PCR tracing campaign was put in place. Heavy rains have hindered access and delayed the provision of lifesaving assistance. The items most needed by individuals include mattresses, blankets, shelter kits and kitchen sets. RNA partners have adopted remote modalities and are engaged in regular discussion to continue to improve them. Lock-down restrictions have affected quality of data collection, partner procurements and timely implementation.



Beneficiaries carry distributed Light repair kits back to their tent, Jiye, El Chouf.

BML

To date, RNA partners have accessed 34 sites out the 48 informal settlements that were referred. There are 25 sites and 388 individuals in informal settlements that have tents impacted by flooding, structural damage, heavy water leakage and snow accumulation. The response has started, and 315 individuals have so far been provided with shelter kits. Assistance in other sectors will mobilize this week. Assessments are still on going to cover the remaining 14 informal settlement that reported to have been affected.

For more information, please contact:

• **Camilla Jelbart – Senior Inter-Agency Officer, UNHCR:** jelbartm@unhcr.org

• **Field emergency focal points:**

North

Georges Estephan / Yasser Waris
Assistant Information Management Officer / Field Officer
+961 70 008 408 / +961 76 182 633
estephan@unhcr.org / waris@unhcr.org

Beirut & Mount Lebanon

Bruno Stolze Lyrio / Dima Jamileh
Field Officer / Assist. Shelter & Wash officer
+961 79 160 184 / +961 03 423 063
stolze@unhcr.org / jamileh@unhcr.org

South

Haydar Haddad / Arash Behazi
Shelter Associate / Field Officer
+961 71 910 338 / +961 71 910 768
hadad@unhcr.org / behazin@unhcr.org

Bekaa

Maureen McBrien / Yara Atallah
Senior Field Officer / Assistant Field Officer
+961 815 35 283 / +961 70 065 692
Mcbrienm@unhcr.org / atallahy@unhcr.org

LCRP Emergency Response

Localized rapid response tools and SOPs

Central-level coordination support to scale up elements of the rapid response, harmonize processes (where needed) and provide overall reporting

Contingency stocks updated to redirect stocks and capacities from different locations and support resupplying

Localized rapid response mechanisms

Standard operating procedures (SOPs)

Customized processes and tools

Partners:

ACF, Amal Organization, Athar, AVSI, Awareness and Equality, Concern WW, DAF, GVC, HAND, Humedica, Intersos, IRC, LebRelief, Medair, MoIM, MoSA, NRC, OXFAM, PCPM, PU-AMI, Save the Children, SCI, SAWA for Aid and Development, SHIELD, Solidarites International, UNHCR, UNICEF, URDA, WFP, WVW