European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Lebanon

Introduction

Of all of Syria’s neighbours, Lebanon has been most affected by the exodus of Syrians fleeing the violence in their country. Since 2011, Lebanon has taken in 1.5 million Syrians and Palestine refugees from Syria; refugees make up 30% of Lebanon’s population, the highest concentration per capita of refugees in the world. Almost 75% of the refugees lack legal residency, exposing them to various protection risks. There are an increasing number of measures targeting Syrian refugees, such as raids, evictions, arbitrary arrests, demolitions, curfews, shop closures and confiscation of documentation.

What are the needs?

The 1.5 million Syrian and Palestinian refugees have added a major strain on Lebanon’s economy and infrastructure. While Lebanon has shown remarkable generosity, increased competition for jobs and resources is fuelling tensions between Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

The authorities have not allowed for the construction of formal camps for Syrian refugees. This has forced many refugees to live in substandard shelters such as garages, warehouses, tents, and unfinished buildings. An increasing number of refugees lack proper legal documentation, restricting their free movement and access to basic services and employment. This exposes refugee families to greater risk of exploitation (including child labour) and poverty.

51% of Syrian refugee households survive on less than $2.9 per person per day, and 88% of the refugee households are in debt. Around 2.2% of Syrian refugee children aged 5 to 17 are reported as working (Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, UN, December 2018), and as many as 43% of school-aged Syrian refugees remain out of school.
How are we helping?

Since 2011, the European Union has provided €580 million in humanitarian funding in Lebanon to respond to the Syria crisis. This funding helps refugees who face high levels of poverty, and who are living on the margins of society, often in substandard accommodation.

To address the combination of structural socio-economic vulnerabilities and a restrictive protection environment, the EU humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees in Lebanon has mostly been in the form of multi-purpose cash assistance. In 2019, this assistance has benefited more than 350,000 people, and is mainly helping them cover their essential needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare.

The EU also supports the provision of specialised protection and legal assistance for refugees. In 2018, more than 170,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon benefited from EU-supported protection services. Additionally, EU humanitarian funding in 2018 helped nearly 30,000 Syrian out-of-school children to access educational services and facilitate their transition to formal education.