



Lebanon: Syria Crisis

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

Number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon:

1.011 million

Number of Palestine refugees from Syria:

30.675

Number of Palestine refugees:

277.985

Number of Iraqi refugees:

6 000

(Source: UNHCR, UNRWA)

Total European Commission funding for Lebanon since the start of the crisis:

More than **1 billion**, including

€439 million

from the humanitarian budget for Syrian refugees and host communities



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Key messages

- Lebanon is the neighbouring country hit the hardest by the Syria crisis. With more than **1.5 million Syrian refugees**, compounded with other refugee communities hosted by the country, Lebanon accounts for the highest refugee per capita.
- Since the beginning of 2015 and with the enforcement of stricter regulations applied by the Government, **access to Lebanon by those fleeing the conflict in Syria has become close to impossible**.
- The European Commission commends the government of Lebanon and its people for their outstanding generosity. However the steadily **deteriorating conditions of the most vulnerable refugees remain of utmost concern**; an increasing number of refugees are being forced to become undocumented, resulting into their inability to move and access basic services as well as to increased exposure to abuse and harassment.
- The European Commission is committed to continuing its support to Lebanon and the humanitarian community in providing assistance to Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. For 2017, €85 million have been allocated for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon.

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Humanitarian situation and needs

Background

Lebanon, a country of 4.4 million inhabitants, is hosting more than 1 million registered Syrian refugees, 30.675 000 Palestinian refugees from Syria, 6 000 Iraqi refugees and nearly 280 000 refugees from Palestine. This makes it the **highest per-capita concentration of refugees worldwide, where one person out of four is a refugee.**

Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011, hundreds of thousands of refugees have crossed into Lebanon seeking safety and shelter, more than 75% of which are children and women. This influx has added **strain on the country's economy and infrastructure.** The pressure is felt in all sectors including education, health, housing, water and electricity supply. As time goes by, competition for jobs and resources is also fuelling tensions in certain areas between Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

Security along the border areas, particularly in Akkar and the northern Bekaa Valley, make **humanitarian access and the delivery of assistance very challenging.** Several episodes of violence in the last years have led to more restrictive policies and crystallised tensions between Lebanese and Syrian refugees, including increased evictions and police raids, mistreatment and restrictions of movement.

Major needs and related problems

In the attempt to decrease the number of Syrian refugees in country aimed at ensuring security as well as easing the burden on its people and economy, on January 2015 the Government of Lebanon announced a new policy regulating entry of Syrian refugees. As a result, **access to territory has significantly decreased with the border 'de-facto' closed for people fleeing violence.** Palestinian refugees from Syria also face increased challenges in accessing the territory since May 2013.

As a result of the increasingly difficult regulations on the release of legal residence permits, a significant number of refugees has become undocumented. The absence of a valid residence permit limits refugees' access to work opportunities and freedom of movement. Faced with steadily increasing socio-economic vulnerability, families are forced to resort into negative coping mechanisms that further expose them to risks of exploitation and abuse.

Based on the **"no camp" policy** adopted by the Government of Lebanon, Syrian refugees are scattered in more than 1700 localities across the country, where they live in apartments, collective shelters, tented settlements, unfinished houses, garages, warehouses or worksites. Refugees in Lebanon have to pay for food, rent, clothes, medicine etc. Almost 9 out of 10 refugees live in 251 locations, which are some of the poorest and most vulnerable neighbourhoods in Lebanon.

The Lebanese healthcare system was already stretched before the influx of Syrians and relied heavily on the private sector. **Syrian refugees face several obstacles when accessing healthcare** including the expensive cost of services, geographical challenges,



and restricted coverage criteria. Refugees who suffer from long lasting and costly chronic diseases (cancer, renal failure, etc.) are not covered.

According to UNHCR, close to 417,000 Syrian refugee children in Lebanon are aged between three and 14 years old. While exact figures are not available, it is estimated that **nearly half of Syrian refugee children do not have access to any form of education**, exposing them to physical and/or psychological violence, child labour and exploitation, early marriage, and recruitment by armed groups. Despite the efforts made by the Ministry of Education and the international actors to address the gap, access to education for many children remains difficult unless the impeding legal and economic factors are addressed comprehensively.

The European Union's Humanitarian Response

Funding

Between 2012 and 2017, the **European Commission has provided EUR 439 million in humanitarian funding** in Lebanon to respond to the Syria crisis, with EUR 85 million only in 2017.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the humanitarian assistance has focused on responding to emerging needs of the most vulnerable refugees, faced with steadily increasing socio-economic vulnerability, inadequate living standards and growing protection concerns.

The EU humanitarian funding has mostly contributed to assist refugees in meeting their basic needs through cash assistance; to provide secondary healthcare for lifesaving cases; to improve living conditions and access to water and sanitation needs of families living in precarious and substandard settings. The provision of ad hoc protection assistance remains critical for refugees faced with legal concerns as well as exposure to violence and harassment.

Given the protracted nature of the Palestinian refugee crisis in Lebanon, other EU instruments have continued to provide support to the Palestinians.

