

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

0. MAJOR CHANGE SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

The conflict in Syria continues to escalate throughout the country. Yarmouk camp located in the southern suburb of Damascus and home to 225,000 Palestinian refugees has been under attack since 14 December, forcing most of its population to seek refuge either in other parts of Damascus or in Lebanon. On 19 December, 4,000 refugees had already crossed the Lebanese border and thousands more are expected to arrive in the coming weeks. This new influx of refugees is coming on top of more than 10,000 Palestinians who arrived in Lebanon in the past months.

The provision of emergency assistance to Palestinian refugees arriving from Syria and to the host communities is a priority. Upon arrival many refugees are accommodated by host families in camps and gatherings, exhausting the already poor local capacities. Refugees are forced to rent barely affordable accommodation or to live in unsuitable conditions. During the winter season, upgrading their basic living conditions is an absolute priority. Another priority is to provide them with essential assistance in terms of health, food and non-food items.

Support to the INGOs and the United Nations agencies in place, and mainly UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Work Agency) in the difficult task of protecting, coordinating and providing emergency assistance to the arriving Palestinian refugees is therefore considered as essential.

The Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) has decided to allocate an additional EUR 2,000,000 to address the immediate humanitarian needs of this new caseload of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Funding will be made available in camps, gatherings and in host communities.

1. CONTEXT

The deterioration of the conflict in Syria has forced Syrian as well as Palestinian refugees to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, including Lebanon. The influx of Syrian and Palestinian refugees has accelerated in the last weeks and by the end of October the number of Palestinians having fled into Lebanon was estimated at more than 8,000.

Lebanon has been hosting Palestinian refugees since 1948, when around 100,000 Palestinians originally fled Palestine to take refuge. Lebanon's population is estimated at 4 million including the Palestinian refugee community. The country is in 83rd position in the 2009 Human Development Index¹, the vulnerability index averages at 2 (out of 3) as attested by a General Needs Assessment survey undertaken in 2010-2011 by the

¹ Lebanon is not included in the 2010 Human Development Index calculations because of missing data for one or more of the indicators.

European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO).

The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are denied major civil rights, including ownership of property, access to employment and access to public social services. A project of a reform of the Labour Law that was meant to improve the conditions for Palestinian refugees had been initiated in August 2010 but did not materialise following the political turmoil that affected Lebanese politics after the toppling of the government in January 2011.

This lack of basic socio-economic rights is the underlying cause of the livelihood insecurity of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the resulting need of providing humanitarian aid. Among the five areas of intervention of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Lebanon is the one with the highest proportion of special hardship cases (most vulnerable refugees).

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) Affected People / potential beneficiaries

The figures provided by UNRWA in a recent socio-economic survey of Palestine refugees in Lebanon² released in December 2010 confirmed that out of the 425,000 refugees registered with UNRWA since 1948, only 260,000 to 280,000 currently resided in Lebanon (about 7% of the country's total population).

Refugees living in camps

There are 12 official camps in Lebanon where 62% of the Palestinian population live e.g. around 173,000 persons as of December 2010 figures.

Refugees living in gatherings

An estimated 38% of the Palestinian population live in 42 unofficial gatherings across the country, totalling to around 106,000 persons. The gatherings fall outside UNRWA's mandate and do not benefit from services, basic infrastructure and shelters rehabilitation and maintenance.

Refugees non registered and with no IDs

In addition to the registered refugees, an estimated 35,000 non-UNRWA registered and 3,000 non-identified Palestinians live in Lebanon without any official means of identification. The absence of an appropriate legal status and protection has put these refugees in a situation of extreme vulnerability.

Refugees from Nahr El Bared camp (NBC)

The 2007 conflict at NBC resulted in the displacement of its entire population, estimated at 27,000 people (5,449 families). End of 2010, more than 3,500 families had returned to

² Socio-economic survey of Palestine refugees in Lebanon conducted by the American University of Beirut (AUB) for UNRWA and funded by the European Union.

the old camp's adjacent area where 1,524 families live in rented accommodations, 1,037 in their own dwellings, 158 are hosted at other families and 844 families live in agency shelters and collective centres. 1,855 families live in Beddawi, Tripoli and neighbouring northern areas.

2) Description of most acute humanitarian needs

The following outlines the most acute humanitarian needs by sectors in Lebanon.

Health

Palestinian refugees remain highly dependent on external assistance for the provision of health care. UNRWA is the main provider of primary health care services and provides most secondary and limited tertiary care services. UNRWA health package for secondary health care does not cover some health problems and neither non Id Palestinians. Tertiary health care is for most of the Palestinians not affordable. Many families have to incur significant medical expenditures to afford treatments excluded from UNRWA eligibility. Provision of specialised care to vulnerable groups such as the elderly is very limited or does not exist.

Recent socio economic survey in Lebanon³ showed that 21% of Palestinian refugees reported experiences of depression, anxiety, distress or other psychological distress but mental health services are not routinely provided by UNRWA. Mental health services are available in the Lebanese private sector but are not affordable. There are some local providers of limited capacity and there is no structured framework to provide mental health care

Food assistance⁴

On a general level, UNRWA runs a Social Safety Net Program that supports the livelihood of the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees. Considering that food insecurity of Palestinian refugees was closely related to chronic poverty, DG ECHO phased out the funding of this programme in 2008 with the exception of Nahr El Bared, where the entire population had been displaced.

With a slow but progressive restoration of access to Nahr El Bared camp, the needs for the concerned Palestinian refugees to benefit from rental and humanitarian food assistance has been perceived as less striking. Nevertheless, unemployment rate remains very high with an average of 40%⁵. Moreover, UNRWA reported that as of June 2011 two thirds of Palestinian refugees had to be considered poor, subsisting on less than USD 6 per day, 6.6% of these subsisting on less than USD 2.17 per day. The majority of those living in poverty and extreme poverty reside in camps in South Lebanon⁶.

³ Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, UNRWA- American University of Beirut December 2010

⁴ see the Communication on Humanitarian Food Assistance http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/foodaid/HFA_Communication_220310.pdf and its Staff Working Document http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/foodaid/HFA_SWD_220310.pdf

⁵ 56% of the overall Palestinian population is reported unemployed across the country

⁶ UNRWA Lebanon Public Information Office, "Palestine Refugees in Lebanon".

There are no signs of improvement for the Nahr El Bared population as the reconstruction process of the camp is slow and financially challenged: only 317 families out of roughly 3,000 families have been moved to their homes in the camp more than four years after the incidents.

Shelter, water and sanitation

The most urgent needs in terms of water and sanitation were covered over the past two years. Nevertheless unexpected needs may arise. A follow up of the living conditions of vulnerable refugees in the main gatherings could be encouraged.

Protection

While Palestinians do not enjoy equal and minimum basic rights in Lebanon UNRWA has only recently started mainstreaming main protection aspects within its programs in addition to the traditional provision of essential basic services such as education, health, relief or social services.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

Presence of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is a politically sensitive issue that is being perceived differently by the various communities of Lebanon, with a specific concern around the current demographic equilibrium between the main confessional groups. The recent move from the Lebanese Government towards improving the living conditions of the Palestinians is welcome. It aims at improving and promoting the socioeconomic integration of the Palestinian community in Lebanon. The law reform proposals have not yet been ratified and are in the process of scrutiny within the Parliament.

2) International Humanitarian Response

UNRWA is the main channel for the humanitarian response to the Palestinian refugees. The European Union's indicative contribution to UNRWA's General Fund in 2011-2013 would amount to EUR 80 million a year subject to budgetary allocations. In addition, the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid- supports UNRWA specific programmes with Ad-Hoc projects. Allocations focus on supporting university scholarships, enhancing access to employment for Palestinian refugees and addressing psychosocial needs of war-affected Palestinian refugee children in Nahr el Bared.

Furthermore, the European Union has contributed over EUR 20 million to the Nahr El Bared Camp (NBC) relief operation and reconstruction.

3) Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity

DG ECHO programme in Lebanon is implemented by UNRWA, International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and components of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, all well established in the country with an adequate absorption capacity and good record of effectiveness in previous operations. There is limited donor support to

address UNRWA's humanitarian response gaps; notably as of April 2011, only 40 % of the funding needed for NBC reconstruction had been met.

4) Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

The proposed humanitarian response includes the following activities :

Health: In 2012 DG ECHO is willing to support secondary health care offered to Palestinians and will cover some of the existing gaps for special medical cases that are not included in the health package offered by UNRWA.

Elderly access to health care remains either very limited or not adapted to their medical needs. The medical needs of the most vulnerable elderly will be covered with the support of DG ECHO through an adapted package of interventions. DG ECHO may furthermore support the provision of specialized Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services. In both cases DG ECHO will work towards the integration of these services within the UNRWA network.

Food assistance: In the absence of tangible improvement of livelihoods of the Nahr El Bared population, UNRWA has maintained the food assistance programme as well as the rental subsidies programme for 2011. The completion of the reconstruction of some flats has allowed certain households to reintegrate their dwellings and should allow the progressive phase out from rental subsidies assistance. DG ECHO will consider continuing its food assistance with an objective to target the households in real emergency food needs and with an objective to enhance the local economy and the diet diversity. Consequently DG ECHO will cease funding free food package distribution but will encourage cash or vouchers to be exchanged against nutritious food items in the local businesses. Also, targeted distribution will replace blanket distribution and the conditionality of aid might be considered. Other livelihood support to Nahr El Bared population might be considered if appropriate and if it enables the beneficiaries to progressively and sustainably exit humanitarian aid programmes.

Shelters, water and sanitation: Following the completion of emergency rehabilitations of shelters as well as water and sanitation networks in the main Palestinian refugee dwellings, a proper follow up should be ensured.

Protection: DG ECHO may keep on supporting efforts to strengthen a comprehensive protection framework that would mainly focus on improving the living conditions of the refugee population in Lebanon.

Expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

The expected results of the proposed intervention are to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees.

4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

There are two main sources of other funding in support of the Palestinian population in Lebanon i.e., the European Commission's Development funds and the Arab donors. There is some scope for Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) in Lebanon. The health sector is the one area where DG ECHO has been filling gaps that should progressively fall into the development remit. Outreach and rehabilitation services for vulnerable beneficiaries may still have to be supplied for some time, until the European Commission's Development Country strategy or other bilateral donors make room for substantial support to the health sector for Palestinians in Lebanon.

The Commission's present multi-annual development cooperation strategy foresees a limited envelope to be allocated for activities in support of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. However, much of this envelope is likely to be targeting the education sector as from 2012. Services in the health sector being provided by UNRWA, efforts should be concentrated in mobilizing additional Member States and Arab donors to contribute to key humanitarian funding needs, particularly in the health sector.

Through the Instrument For Stability (IFS), EUR 12 million have been allocated in September 2011 to support UNRWA over a period of 36 months in the form of an interim response, to address shelter needs, either through physical rehabilitation activities or rental fees subsidies to the displaced of Nahr el Bared camp. The programme will benefit over 3,000 families displaced from NBC in addition to an estimated 736 families residing in the other 11 Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon. A second round of contribution of EUR 12 million is planned for shelter support within the Palestine refugee camps in Lebanon for 36 months until 2014.

5. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL DETAILS

The provisions of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2012/01000 and the general conditions of the Partnership Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

5.1. Contacts⁷

Operational Unit in charge:	ECHO/B4
Contact persons at HQ:	Maria Palacios; Christophe Pateron
In the field:	Bruno Rotival

5.2. Financial info

Indicative Allocation:	EUR 7,000,000
Man-made crisis:	Hum. Aid: EUR 5,000,000
	Food Assistance: EUR 2,000,000

⁷ Letters of intent should be submitted using APPEL. Instructions on how to submit Letters of intent using APPEL are available at:
http://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/preparing_an_action/financing_decision/intention_letter

5.3. Proposal Assessment

Note: No new assessment round following updated version 3. The additional amount will be allocated to on-going operations.

Assessment round 1

- a. Description of the humanitarian aid interventions relating to this assessment round: all interventions as described in section 3.4 of this HIP.
- b. Indicative amount to be allocated in this round of proposals: up to EUR 5,000,000 from the humanitarian aid budget line and EUR 2,000,000 from the food assistance budget line.
- c. Costs will be eligible from 01/01/2012⁸.
- d. The expected initial duration for the Action is up to 12 months
- e. Potential partners: All DG ECHO Partners.
- f. Information to be provided: Letter of intent⁹, based on the Single form format and including at least: area of intervention, sector, duration, beneficiaries, context/needs assessment, proposed response (results, activities), estimated costs, requested contribution, contact details. Alternatively, the Letter of intent can be free format (max 5 pages), including the same information.
- g. Indicative date for receipt of the above requested information: by 1 December 2011¹⁰.
- h. Commonly used principles will be applied for the assessment of proposals, such as coherence of the proposal with DG ECHO's strategy, quality of needs assessment, quality of indicators, relevance of intervention sectors, and knowledge of the country / region.

⁸ The eligibility date of the Action is not linked to the date of receipt of the Single Form. It is either the eligibility date set in the Single form or the eligibility date of the HIP, what ever occurs latest.

⁹ In case letters of intent are requested an initial analysis will be done on the basis of the information received, Single Forms and other sources, such as humanitarian programmes and appeals (CAPs or CHAPs). For the retained letters of intent, partners will be requested to submit a Single Form, which will be the subject of a more detailed assessment. Only accepted Single Forms can lead to the signature of an agreement.

¹⁰ The Commission reserves the right to consider letters of intent/ single forms transmitted after this date, especially in case certain needs/ priorities are not covered by the received letters of intent.