



Better understanding the needs of Vulnerable Lebanese Returnees from Syria: IOM builds capacity and launches a registration and profiling exercise in Lebanon

On **12 July**, IOM and the High Relief Commission of Lebanon officially launched a registration and profiling project for Lebanese returnees from Syria. Over 25,000 returnees, across 6 governorates, will be registered and profiled during this six month project. Through the project, vulnerable Lebanese returnee households will be profiled in order to better understand their priority and long-term needs.

From 11 to 12 July, 22 staff from the High Relief Commission of Lebanon attended a capacity building workshop organized in Beirut. The workshop was facilitated by IOM experts from the Emergency (IDP Programs) and Information Management Unit in Iraq. The technical workshop covered: data collection methods, conducting field interviews, designing assessment tools, and encoding information.

Lebanese returnees from Syria have particular vulnerabilities as they have gone largely unassisted as there has been little accurate information available regarding their locations, living conditions, livelihood options and coping mechanisms.

On 15 July, HRC teams with the support of IOM began to register returnee households. To date, 1,459 Lebanese returnee households (approximately 7,300 individuals) have been registered in the North, Bekaa, and Nabatiye governorates.

Since March 2012, an estimated 650,000 people of concern have fled from Syria across the border into Lebanon placing immense pressure on hosting communities across the country.

Lebanon has maintained an open border policy since the Syria crisis began over two years ago. In many municipalities, host communities are being overwhelmed and coping mechanisms have been eroded by the massive influx of people in need.

Certain governorates, such as North and Bekaa, share the



Distribution of Non-Food Items to Lebanese Returnees © IOM 2013

largest burden of displacement, in these areas there is less capacity to host refugees and Lebanese returnees as the regions already suffered high poverty levels and low employment rates prior to the crisis.

The unprecedented influx from Syria has resulted in an increased demand on public health care facilities and the disruption of regional trade caused by the crisis has resulted in a slump in the growth of Lebanese gross national product. Lebanese communities are complaining that unregulated employment and rising inflation is limiting their abilities to provide for their families. Food security is also a major concern, where households, particularly in the North and Bekaa have limited food stocks. Since March 2012, household expenses have increased and for many communities and exceed the income earning opportunities available to them.

In September, IOM will complete an assessment to determine livelihoods needs as a basis for designing and implementing interventions which will assist conflict-affected communities, including Lebanese returnees, as well as host communities in Lebanon.

The findings of the assessment will be used to develop programming to support livelihoods in order to lessen the impact of conflict displacement and host community pressures in the context of prolonged conflict in neighbouring Syria. In addition to increasing the income-generating capacity of priority households, the expected assessment and interventions will provide an important benchmark for promoting resilience at the household level and stability at the community level.

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