

Lebanon Crisis

Health Cluster Bulletin # 18

Friday 29 May 2007

The Lebanon Crisis Health Cluster Bulletin aims to give an overview of the health activities conducted by the health cluster partners in the areas affected by the latest conflict in Lebanon. It compiles health information received from the different organizations working in the most affected areas.

The Health Cluster Bulletin will be issued on a weekly basis for the time being.



Picture: World Vision Lebanon

World Vision team distributing Baby Hygiene Kits to IDPs in Baddawi camp.

May 27, 2007

Highlights

- One additional injury due to Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs), cluster bombs and mines was reported in the South.
- Six cases of suspected Pertussis were reported from Bint Jbeil, Nabatiyeh, and Tyr through the Early Warning and Response system (EWARS). Investigation is being undertaken.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is leading the Humanitarian and Relief interventions in response to the Nahr El-Bared Crisis.
- A Flash Appeal is being developed for the immediate humanitarian relief at Nahr El-Bared for the coming 90 days.
- Limited electricity supply as well as water and sanitation services and sewage disposal constitute major concerns in the Nahr El-Bared camp.
- Essential medications are readily available. Additional stocks will be provided by WHO and UNRWA.
- Al Baddawi camp is hosting around 21,000 Palestinian IDPs.

Situation Overview

- According to the National Demining Office (NDO) and UNDP Mine action, one new casualty was registered during the past 20 days in the South, bringing the total number of military and civilian casualty figures due to landmines/UXOs/cluster bombs to 234 divided as follows: 192 injured civilians, 21 killed civilians and 21 military casualties as of May 29, 2007. The limited changeability in the figures is thought to be owing to the awareness campaigns undertaken at the community level in the affected areas, as well as the demining efforts in the populated areas undertaken by the mine action community.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- As of 20 May 2007, hostilities are taking place between the Lebanese Army and members of an extreme Islamist group, Fatah al-Islam, in the Nahr El-Bared camp in Tripoli, North of Lebanon, causing a large number of casualties that is still undetermined. Movement in and out of the camp is still limited. The Lebanese Red Cross and the Palestinian Red Crescent, in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are ensuring medical evacuations from the camp.
- In total, more than 5,122 families (average family size is 5 persons) have been internally displaced, and are currently housed in Beddawi camp (4,365 families), and Tripoli (1,000 families), in addition to 660 families that have fled to camps in the central Lebanon area (250 families), the South (187 families), and the Bekaa (15 families). There are an estimated 3,000-5,000 people remaining in the camp.
- Running water and electricity supply are not currently available inside the Nahr El-Bared camp. The main water wells serving the camp have been partially damaged or destroyed. Sewage disposal and hygiene are major concerns, increasing the likelihood of disease outbreaks.
- Schools in Baddawi camp are currently occupied by IDPs.
- Discussions about possible solutions are underway between UNRWA and the Ministry of Education regarding the participation in the forthcoming official exams by displaced children who have lost their Identification Cards.

Health Response to the Humanitarian Crisis

National and international Health Cluster partners are providing support in four core areas:

1. Assessment and monitoring

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- UNRWA teams joined by UNICEF experts in emergency response have conducted a preliminary needs assessment in terms of food, water, Non Food items (NFI), sanitation, shelter, and human resources, structure, and supplies.
- World Vision have disseminated the "Humanitarian and Emergency Assessment Report – Palestinian Crisis Response", based on an assessment their team conducted on May 24th and 25th at the Beddawi camp. Findings show there are limited basic services such as electricity, water and sanitation, as well as limited medical services through dispensaries and one small hospital (Palestinian Red Crescent Hospital), and a need for medications for chronic illnesses as well as mental illnesses.

2. Health coordination

- The Health cluster meeting is being held biweekly on Tuesdays at 15:00, WHO office within the Ministry of Public Health office in Tyr. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday June 5.
- The Mental Health and Psychosocial Support sub-cluster coordination meeting is held once per month. The next meeting will take place on Monday June 25 at 12:00, WHO office-Tyr.
- The Health Cluster and Mental Health Matrices are regularly updated and shared with partners.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Contingency planning team has met 3 times on the 22nd, 24th, and 28th of May to provide coordinated support to UNRWA's leadership in responding to the humanitarian crisis in Nahr El-Bared camp.
- WHO in coordination with the MOPH chaired the first Health Cluster meeting on May 23 regarding the Nahr El-Bared situation, with the participation of UN agencies and International NGOs.
- UNICEF chaired the first Child Protection Working Group meeting on May 23 regarding the Nahr El-Bared situation. The group is conducting assessments to coordinate psychosocial programs for children, as well as recreational activities and the production of IEC material on safety for vulnerable children.
- The UNRWA emergency coordination team in Tripoli chaired a meeting with the local, international, and Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the humanitarian and relief assistance. The team is also meeting daily to coordinate with the North Mohafez and the president of the municipality of Tripoli.
- WHO has provided UNRWA with updated lists and contacts of Primary Health Care Centers, hospitals, and key NGOs.

3. Filling health gaps

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- The High Relief Council (HRC) is equipping an office at the Karame exhibition center in Tripoli to accommodate 1,000 families (5,000 persons). Mobile toilets and washing facilities are being installed.
- The food basket was modified to include 16 items and food stocks are readily available.
- UNRWA in coordination with the different partners has provided 2,000 mattresses for the IDPs.
- Hariri Foundation is providing 7,500 ratios of food on a daily basis to the IDPs.
- The Baddawi camp health center is operating on double shift to provide essential medical services to the IDPs.
- UNRWA has established two mobile clinics to provide medical services to IDPs.
- Hariri Foundation is providing medical services free of charge at all its clinics in the North for the Palestinian community at both Nahr El-Bared and Baddawi camps.
- ICRC has provided 79,000 liters of drinking water, 95 tonnes of food, 5 tonnes of bread, and 2 tonnes of candles to Nahr El-Bared and Baddawi camps. ICRC has also provided food parcels and hygiene kits to 216 families who have been displaced to the Bekaa valley and South of Lebanon.
- Movimiento por la Paz (MPDL) in partnership with Nabaa and the support of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department has distributed 300 hygiene kits to 300 families in Beddawi camp.
- World Vision distributed more than 500 baby hygiene kits to Palestinian IDPs in the Beddawi camp.
- The Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency provided with the help of ICRC 2,000 bags of blood, 10 water mattresses, and other medical supplies to the Safad Hospital in Tripoli, which is now serving as trauma hospital.
- WHO has committed one emergency trauma kit as well as chronic and essential medical care kits. Two additional trauma kits have been requested from the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) and will be available this week.
- UNICEF has committed to the emergency in Nahr El-Bared 2,900 two-liter water bottles, 90,000 five-liter water bottles, 24 collapsible water tanks (5,000 liters each), 19 rigid water tanks (1,500 liters each), a water treatment plant, 180 family hygiene kits, 100 families water kits, obstetrics kits to handle 150 deliveries, and other

supplies. UNICEF has provided essential drugs and medical supplies to Safad Hospital in Baddawi camp.

- UNICEF is providing school-in-a-box supplies to support the urgent educational needs of more than 1,000 Palestinian students, as well as their transportation between Baddawi camp and UNRWA schools in Tripoli to participate in the official exams.
- UNFPA provided UNRWA with 2,800 hygiene kits to cater the needs of displaced families from the Nahr El-Bared Camp. The hygiene kits include sanitary material such as antiseptic, shampoo, toilet paper, facial tissue, and detergent, in addition to hair comb, bandage, towel, razor and shaving cream.

4. Preserving and supporting local health systems

- WHO has resumed its trainings on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies targeting paramedical staff at the level of Primary Health Care centers, conducting so far 7 trainings in Tripoli, Beirut, Marjeyoun, and Mount Lebanon, and reaching 210 participants.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- UNRWA made arrangements with the local pharmacies in Tripoli to sell medications that are not available in its stock at reduced prices.
- UNRWA, with the facilitation of the Ministry of Public Health director General, as well as WHO, made arrangements with the Islamic Hospital in Tripoli to admit Palestinian patients at reduced prices.

World Health Organization

<http://www.leb.emro.who.int/>

<http://www.virtualhic.org>

All inputs are welcome on:

health@leb.emro.who.int