



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SITUATION REPORT

Lebanon Humanitarian Emergency

USG Humanitarian Situation Report #20, Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

August 15, 2006

Note: The last situation report was dated August 14, 2006.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Displaced populations are rapidly proceeding home, according to the USG Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART). According to the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator (UNHC) for Lebanon, most internally displaced persons (IDPs) are using their own resources to return home. However, IDPs may be more reluctant to return to the Israel–Lebanon border area where houses have been destroyed.
- On August 15, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in partnership with the Lebanese Red Cross, reported the following priorities in southern Lebanon: evacuation of the wounded and recovery of bodies; delivery of water, food, and essential medicines to directly affected populations; provision of food parcels; rebuilding water system infrastructure; and support for hospitals providing medical care.
- Despite the current ceasefire, the situation in southern Lebanon remains insecure as the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) withdraw, the Lebanese Armed Forces move in, and the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is reinforced. As of August 15, there have been no reports of security incidents since the cease fire took effect, according to UNIFIL.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE - LEBANON		SOURCE ¹
Dead	1,110	Government of Lebanon (GOL) - August 14, 2006
Injured	3,698	GOL - August 14, 2006
IDPs	747,397	GOL - August 14, 2006
Displaced to Neighboring Countries	231,000	GOL - August 14, 2006
Total Displaced Population	980,393	GOL - August 14, 2006

Total USG Humanitarian Assistance Committed to Lebanon.....\$24,069,301
Total USG Humanitarian Assistance Pledged to Lebanon\$50,000,000

CURRENT SITUATION

- Following the ceasefire, population movements and uncertainty over access to areas south of the Litani River are preventing relief agencies from accurately assessing the number of people affected. The GOL Higher Relief Council (HRC) reports that 1,110 people have been killed and 3,698 people have been injured. As of August 14, HRC reported that 980,393 people had fled their homes, or more than one-fourth of Lebanon’s population. Most IDPs fled to Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Chouf, and Aaley. Prior to the ceasefire, HRC estimated that 605,000 IDPs were staying with relatives and friends, more than 142,000 were located in schools and public institutions, and approximately 231,000 had fled to neighboring countries, including Syria. However, the DART has received reports that many public buildings are increasingly empty as IDPs return home, and the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that thousands of refugees are returning from Syria. As population movements subside and relief agencies obtain improved access, more precise information should become available.

Humanitarian Access

- The continuing IDF naval blockade is significantly delaying deliveries by sea, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). A U.N.-chartered ship, scheduled to travel from Beirut to Tyre (Sur) on the evening of August 15, is required to exit and re-enter Lebanese waters, increasing travel time from 4 to 16 hours.
- Two tanker ships carrying fuel remain docked in Cyprus. In the interim, OCHA reports that 30 trucks have delivered fuel from the Jiyeh power plant, north of Sidon (Saida), to ensure continued public services in Beirut.
- On August 15, ICRC received IDF concurrence for all movements, including nine convoys and numerous shuttles, most of which will focus on needs assessments, according to U.S. Department of State’s Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM). ICRC is working to obtain additional trucks in order to increase assessments and relief distributions. To meet fuel needs, ICRC is deploying fuel tanker trucks and an ICRC supply ship.
- On August 15, the U.N. dispatched seven humanitarian convoys to areas in the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon, including to the villages of Ramesh and Debel.
- Relief convoys are encountering significant logistical constraints due to poor road conditions and increased traffic. According to OCHA, the large number of returnees traveling via car, combined with damage to both major and minor roads, continues to result in congestion along key intersections in the south, including the Litani River crossings.

¹ The GOL has not provided updated figures since the ceasefire took effect on August 14.

Returns

- Following the ceasefire that began on August 14, major population movements have been reported throughout Lebanon. According to the DART, IDPs have begun to vacate schools in Beirut; in shelters where USG partner Mercy Corps is providing assistance, 80 percent of IDPs have left or plan to leave. UNHCR estimated that approximately 6,000 IDPs per hour have traveled from Beirut toward southern Lebanon, and at least 17,000 refugees have returned to Lebanon from crossing points at Dabusiya, Yabous, Aarida, and Juseah. In addition, UNIFIL reported that 7,000 to 8,000 persons moved south to Nabatiye, Tyre, Sarita, Qana, and Jwayya.
- UNHCR teams are operating 24 hours a day to assist returnees at the four main border crossings from Syria. Teams are identifying vulnerable cases and distributing packages of water, high-energy biscuits, wet towels, and re-hydration salts.
- UNHCR has also begun organizing transportation for refugees returning to Lebanon. According to UNHCR, one convoy is scheduled to transport 250 Lebanese from Damascus to Beirut and Sidon. UNHCR is working with local authorities in Homs, Syria, to organize a second convoy to transport 320 people to major cities in Lebanon, including Hermel, Baalbek, Tripoli, and Beirut. For those who arrived in Syria on foot, UNHCR has arranged a shuttle bus from the Yabous border crossing near Damascus to transport refugees into Lebanon, where taxi service is available.

Landmine and Unexploded Ordnance

- On August 14, the U.N. Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported several incidents involving unexploded ordnance (UXO), including the death of a child in Tyre and eight civilian injuries in Kfar Roumane and Nabatiye, OCHA reports.
- A UNIFIL demining team has conducted controlled explosions of 36 UXO near Kafr Kila and 2 UXO near the Ras Naqoura border crossing. The U.N. Development Program (UNDP) Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has begun mapping roads cleared of UXO, according to the DART.
- On August 17, the Lebanese Army is scheduled to begin distribution of 100,000 UXO awareness leaflets to checkpoints, key routes into southern Lebanon, and IDP centers, according to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF). A UXO television advertisement is scheduled to be complete by August 16. In addition, UNHCR teams providing relief supplies to returnees are providing information on UXO dangers.

Damage Assessments

- UNIFIL has begun assessing damage to civilian infrastructure in the UNIFIL area of operation. UNIFIL reports that homes have been destroyed in the following villages: 80 percent of houses in Tayyabah, 50 percent in Markaba and Qantarrah, 30 percent in Mays al Jabal, 20 percent in Houla, and 15 percent in Talusha. In addition, the bridges at Ain Arab and Al Qusair have been completely destroyed.

Shelter

- To respond to the shelter needs of returning IDPs whose homes have been destroyed, UNHCR is preparing to offer tents as a short-term solution. UNHCR will provide materials and tools for reconstruction of existing shelters and cash grants to assist in rebuilding. The GOL and other agencies are working to develop more permanent shelter options, including the provision of one warm room—with a roof, water, and electricity—per household to help families in the winter months.
- ICRC reported that some families in southern Lebanon may have financial resources to begin rebuilding homes, as many families receive remittances from relatives working overseas, according to the DART.

Emergency Relief Supplies

- On August 15, two U.N.-chartered ships offloaded relief supplies in Beirut. One of the ships is scheduled to travel to Tyre on August 15, carrying 21 trucks with food commodities, drinking water, hygiene supplies, water purification tablets, and fuel for emergency hospital supplies and relief operations.
- Approximately 50,000 tents, 230,000 mattresses, and 172,000 blankets are currently en route to Lebanon, according to OCHA.

Food

- ICRC reported that tobacco and grapes, two of the main crops in southern Lebanon, have been lost for this growing season due to the conflict, and olive production may be similarly affected. This loss may impact the ability of farmers to purchase food once stores are replenished.
- On August 12, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) announced plans to provide food aid to 500,000 IDPs in public institutions and host families for 3 months. WFP is currently consolidating a database on the number of IDPs in need of assistance, and identifying additional implementing partners to assist with local distribution.
- WFP is working to ensure that donated wheat flour is converted into bread, particularly in public centers where cooking facilities are limited, according to the DART. WFP is currently negotiating an agreement for the National Union of Bakers to produce 6000 kg of bread for every metric ton of donated wheat flour. According to WFP, this conversion rate would allow bakers to cover operating expenses, including labor and fuel.
- On August 14, ICRC provided 18,000 people in the Rashidieh camp, supported by the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), with flour for bread-making, and family food parcels to 150 displaced persons sheltering in Tibnin hospital.

Health

- As of August 15, hospitals in Tyre report that fuel and oxygen remain urgent needs, according to the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, WHO reported that assessments in southern Lebanon have identified patients who are not receiving proper care for chronic illnesses.
- On August 15, UNICEF reported that vaccines to supplement the ongoing measles and polio immunization campaign have arrived safely in Beirut.

Water and Sanitation

- In response to the large number of returns throughout Lebanon, the U.N. is shifting the focus of water and sanitation activities from public buildings to home areas, particularly in southern Lebanon. According to OCHA, current needs include rapid assessments of water systems, installation of emergency water systems where damage is extreme, provision of fuel for pumping systems, distribution of water supplies until systems are repaired, repairs to sanitation systems, and the installation of emergency sanitation systems where required.
- On August 15, two UNICEF water and sanitation experts are scheduled to begin assessments in the south.
- As of August 15, Tyre remains without power due to IDF air strikes against the power plant on the night of August 12. ICRC is working with local authorities to restore power.

Recovery

- On August 14, the U.N. announced plans to revise the Flash Appeal to cover a three-to-four month timeframe, incorporating shelter and rehabilitation activities.
- According to UNICEF, the GOL is establishing a Special Recovery Unit (SRU) within the Prime Minister's Office. The SRU, supported by UNDP, will establish a dedicated website to ensure transparency on projects, funding, and implementation partners. The SRU's mandate should be finalized by next week, according to UNICEF.

Protection

- On August 14, prior to beginning of the cease fire, an UNRWA staff member was killed during an Israeli air strike at the Ein el-Hilweh camp near Sidon. An air strike targeting the Burj Shemali Palestinian refugee camp near Tyre killed one Palestinian refugee, according to State/PRM.

Refugees

- On August 15, UNHCR announced that it is prepared to assist up to 50,000 refugees who may delay their return from Syria. The Syrian Ministry of Education is prepared to integrate 20,000 Lebanese students during the next school year, according to UNICEF.

USG ACTION

- On July 25, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Jeffrey Feltman declared a humanitarian emergency in Lebanon due to ongoing insecurity and humanitarian needs. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has authorized \$50 million in USG humanitarian assistance to persons affected by conflict in Lebanon.
- On July 23, a USG DART, led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), arrived in the region to determine priorities for USG humanitarian assistance. A Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team is supporting the DART.
- USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), via U.S. military transport, has provided 1,000 tarps, 20,000 blankets, and 18 emergency health kits in support of relief operations in Lebanon. The DART has consigned these relief supplies to ICRC, WHO, the International Medical Corps (IMC), and Mercy Corps for delivery to approximately 235,000 beneficiaries in Beirut and southern Lebanon.
- On July 26, USAID/OFDA provided \$7 million to support the U.N. Flash Appeal for Lebanon, including \$3.3 million to WFP and the U.N. Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC) for logistics, \$2.5 million to UNICEF for water and sanitation activities, and \$1.2 million to OCHA and OCHA's Humanitarian Information Center (HIC) for coordination.
- On July 31, USAID/OFDA provided \$3.3 million to Mercy Corps for water and sanitation services, psychosocial activities, and the distribution of food and relief supplies.
- On August 3, USAID/OFDA provided \$2.8 million to Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for water and sanitation services, psychosocial support, emergency shelter activities, and the distribution of food and relief supplies.
- On August 8, USAID/OFDA provided \$1.9 million to IMC for health services, psychosocial support, water and sanitation activities, and emergency relief supplies.
- State/PRM has contributed \$3.4 million to ICRC's emergency appeal for Lebanon, \$1 million to IOM, and \$4 million in support of the U.N. Flash Appeal, including \$2 million to UNHCR and \$2 million to UNRWA.
- In addition to evacuating nearly 15,000 American citizens, the U.S. Military has been integral in providing transport to Beirut for both the DART and USAID emergency relief supplies.

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON IN FY 2006¹

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Mercy Corps	Water and sanitation, psychosocial support, emergency relief supplies, and food	Affected areas	\$3,369,250
CRS	Water and sanitation, psychosocial support, food, emergency shelter, and emergency relief supplies	Beirut	\$2,836,582
IMC	Water and sanitation, health, psychosocial support, and emergency relief supplies	Affected areas	\$1,913,457
WFP	Logistics	Affected areas	\$3,000,000
UNJLC	Logistics	Affected areas	\$300,000
UNICEF	Water and sanitation	Affected areas	\$2,500,000
OCHA	Coordination	Affected areas	\$1,000,000
OCHA/HIC	Coordination	Affected areas	\$200,000
Multiple	Emergency relief supplies, including transport	Affected areas	\$394,162
	DART administrative costs	Affected areas	\$143,850
ICRC	Protection, food, health, and water and sanitation	Beirut, Southern Lebanon	\$3,412,000
IOM	Evacuation of third-country nationals	Affected areas	\$1,000,000
UNHCR	Protection, shelter, and emergency relief supplies	Affected areas	\$2,000,000
UNRWA	Food, health, and emergency relief supplies	Affected areas	\$2,000,000
TOTAL FY 2006 USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON			\$24,069,301

¹USG funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of August 15, 2006.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on identifying such organizations is available in the “How Can I Help” section of www.usaid.gov (keyword: Lebanon) or by calling the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) at 703-276-1914.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov (keyword: donations)
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int