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REGIONAL SITUATION REPORT

LEBANON - OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY - SYRIA

OVERVIEW

The ongoing Israeli occupation and blockade of Gaza have led to decades of suffering for Palestinians, with the past year marking one of the deadliest and most destructive periods in recent history. Israeli military operations in Gaza have resulted in over **41,615 Palestinian deaths and more than 96,359 injuries**. The uptick of violence since October 2023 has triggered a ripple effect across the Middle East, intensifying regional tensions and leading to widespread instability. In turn, intense bombardments and ground operations have caused severe casualties among civilian populations, mass displacement and **increased humanitarian needs for hundreds of thousands already living in limbo, across Lebanon, Syria, and beyond**.

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Since the onset of Israeli bombardments end of September, the situation in Lebanon has rapidly deteriorated, resulting in approximately **2,036 casualties and more than 9,662 injuries**, with 76% of these injuries occurring since September 16th (according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health). The hostilities have led to a significant displacement crisis, with the Government of Lebanon estimating up to **1.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)**. Additionally, **more than 240,000 people, including Lebanese (30%) and Syrian refugees (70%), have crossed into Syria seeking safety**. The humanitarian response is further complicated by restricted access to some affected areas and the rising cost of living, which has forced many displaced families into overcrowded and inadequate shelters.

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Since May 2024, DRC has been actively engaged in the oPt through a partnership approach, working with local partners to expand its humanitarian response. The continued Israeli occupation compounds the protracted crisis in the region, resulting in severe humanitarian challenges. The situation has escalated since October 2023, with **Israeli military offensives in Gaza and the West Bank unprecedented in magnitude, resulting in intensified humanitarian needs**.

DRC remains committed to saving lives and alleviating suffering in Gaza and the West Bank through a multi-sectoral response that prioritizes the needs of displaced Palestinians and employing conflict-sensitive approaches.

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Since September 23rd, 2024, escalating hostilities in Lebanon have triggered significant displacement of civilians across borders into Syria. **Over 240,000 individuals have officially crossed into Syria, with this number likely underreported due to the exclusion of those using informal crossings.** Approximately 70% of these arrivals are Syrian, and 30% are Lebanese, with a small proportion from other nationalities, including Palestinians. Most arrivals are under 18 years old, highlighting the vulnerability of the displaced population. The situation at the borders remains critical, with families often arriving on foot, facing long wait times, and lacking essential supplies. Damage from Israeli airstrikes at the main border crossing has also severely impacted cross border movement.

CONTEXT

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Displacement and Shelter Needs: As of October 5th, fighting between Israeli forces and Hezbollah has resulted in approximately 2,036 casualties and over 9,662 injuries across Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon (GoL) reports that up to 1.2 million people have been internally displaced due to the conflict, while more than 240,000 individuals already crossed into Syria, seeking safety from hostilities. The Lebanese General Security (GSO) has facilitated the movement of Syrians out of Lebanon through any land border crossing, although challenges remain for those without proper documentation.

Lebanese authorities have designated 940 collective shelters nationwide, with 77% already at full capacity, housing over 173,000 IDPs. The lack of available space and skyrocketing rental prices—more than doubling in areas like Tripoli and the Beqaa—have pushed many IDPs into unofficial shelters that lack adequate living conditions. This rapid opening of informal sites poses significant concerns about the oversight, safety, and management of these shelters as humanitarian actors have limited access to these locations.

Anti-Refugee Sentiment and Discrimination: Anti-refugee rhetoric in Lebanon has been intensifying since 2019 and is now influencing the acceptance policies of collective shelters, where site managers are selectively allowing people based on nationality. For instance, only two out of 108 collective shelters in the North are officially accepting displaced Syrian refugees, while many governorates are explicitly prohibiting entry for Syrians. This discriminatory trend is likely to deepen divisions along ethnic and sectarian lines, increasing the vulnerabilities of marginalized groups, including Palestinian refugees who are now largely dependent on UNRWA-designated shelters.

Humanitarian Access and Operational Challenges: Humanitarian access remains severely restricted in areas heavily impacted by airstrikes, such as Baalbek El Hermel, southern Beirut, and southern Lebanon. While relocation is relatively easier for residents of Beirut's southern suburbs, those from Baalbek El Hermel face significant difficulties due to the destruction of main roads. Humanitarian actors are facing challenges in safely reaching affected populations, limiting the assistance that can be delivered in these high-risk areas. Displacement of humanitarian workers, including 20 DRC staff from the Beqaa who have relocated to safer regions, further disrupts aid operations.

Protection Concerns and Host Communities: The crisis has exacerbated the vulnerabilities of displaced individuals, particularly for female-headed households, who face exploitation risks, including from transport providers. The fragmented shelter conditions and increasing segregation along sectarian lines

reflect Lebanon's long-standing societal divisions, raising concerns about the long-term impact on marginalized communities.

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The humanitarian crisis in the oPt has significantly worsened, particularly in Gaza, where the death toll has exceeded 41,000 due to the ongoing Israeli military offensive. The blockade imposed by the Israeli government continues to obstruct aid, with **only 17% of the required food aid reaching Gaza in September**, a steep decline from 66% in 2023. Families are now forced to survive on one meal every other day, with an **urgent need for malnutrition treatment for 50,000 children aged 6-59 months**. The availability of medical supplies is critically low, with **only 35% of the necessary insulin available and half of the required blood supply**. Hygiene items have also dwindled to just 15% of last year's levels, leaving one million women without essential supplies.

The healthcare system is nearing collapse, currently operating with only 1,500 hospital beds compared to 3,500 in 2023. Shelter needs remain critical, with nearly 1.9 million people requiring assistance as 60% of homes have been destroyed or severely damaged since January 2024. Since May, only 25,000 people have received temporary shelters. Violence against aid workers has escalated, as illustrated by the attack on a UNRWA school that was sheltering 12,000 displaced individuals, resulting in 34 deaths, including six UN staff members. Additionally, a UN convoy delivering polio vaccines was shot at and detained by Israeli forces, highlighting the risks faced by humanitarian personnel.

In the West Bank, Israeli military operations have intensified, marking the largest offensive since the second Intifada, with concentrated military activities in Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarem, and Nablus. Since October 7th, **693 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank alone**. With the olive harvest season approaching, Palestinian farmers face significant challenges due to Israeli access restrictions and settler violence, affecting their ability to harvest over 96,000 dunums of olive-cultivated land.

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Border Movement and Entry Conditions: Intense flow of civilians entering Syria from Lebanon is expected to continue, including through informal crossing points, as Syrians without official documentation or those fearing military conscription seek entry into the country. Conditions at the borders are increasingly dire, with many families arriving on foot, without adequate provisions and often waiting for hours or even days to be processed.

On October 4th, Israeli airstrikes damaged roads near the Jdeidet Yabous border crossing in Rural Damascus, redirecting movement to smaller border crossings in Homs Governorate. The Syrian Government's recent extension of the waiver for the mandatory \$100 USD exchange for Syrian arrivals has slightly eased congestion at the border with Lebanon while more needs to be done by all actors to address the overwhelming needs at the border crossings.

Essential Needs and Humanitarian Challenges: The demand for food and clean drinking water remains high, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities at the border are overcrowded, with critical shortages of feminine hygiene products and diapers for infants and the elderly. Women and children crossing the border without male family members show signs of severe trauma, making them more sensitive to dignity issues and less likely to accept aid.

Significant gaps in civil documentation for many Syrians, including unregistered children and women who previously entered Lebanon informally, pose challenges in ensuring efficient crossing and access to services. Female-headed households face heightened risks of exploitation, particularly from transport providers, as they struggle to secure safe passage and accommodation.

Hosting Centres: DRC's rapid assessments in 12 Hosting Centres in Hama, Homs, and Rural Damascus revealed severe conditions requiring urgent intervention. These centres, primarily housing Lebanese arrivals, are in dire need of rehabilitation to meet basic living standards. Essential WASH services, adherence to SPHERE standards, and the creation of Child-Friendly Spaces for psychosocial support are among the top priorities. Dignity and hygiene kits, especially for young girls and new mothers, are urgently needed to maintain hygiene and restore dignity to those displaced.

Host Communities and Protection Concerns: Host communities in Syria, already struggling with high levels of need, are now accommodating both IDPs and new arrivals fleeing the conflict in Lebanon. Vulnerable households opening their doors to displaced Syrians are further strained, with increased food insecurity and limited access to water, sanitation, education, and healthcare.

Many returning Syrians find their homes severely damaged or looted, forcing them into makeshift shelters that offer little protection against the approaching winter. Protection concerns are acute in these areas, with limited services available to mitigate risks of exploitation and abuse including GBV.

Coordination and Response Efforts: SARC, UNHCR, and WHO have established Border Health-Protection Support Points at key entry locations to provide immediate assistance and medical care to those arriving. Despite ongoing efforts to coordinate the humanitarian response, including local government meetings and inter-agency collaborations, significant gaps remain in service delivery, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. The lack of coordinated protection and the need for targeted support to vulnerable populations pose serious challenges to the overall response strategy.



“We travelled for two days from my village in the South, near the border with Israel, to Akkar [North of Lebanon] and it took one day only to get to Saida, which is forty km from where we live. We did not have time to collect anything from our house. I have nothing, only these clothes you see me with.”

- Lebanese displaced woman sheltering in Akkar

DRC RESPONSE

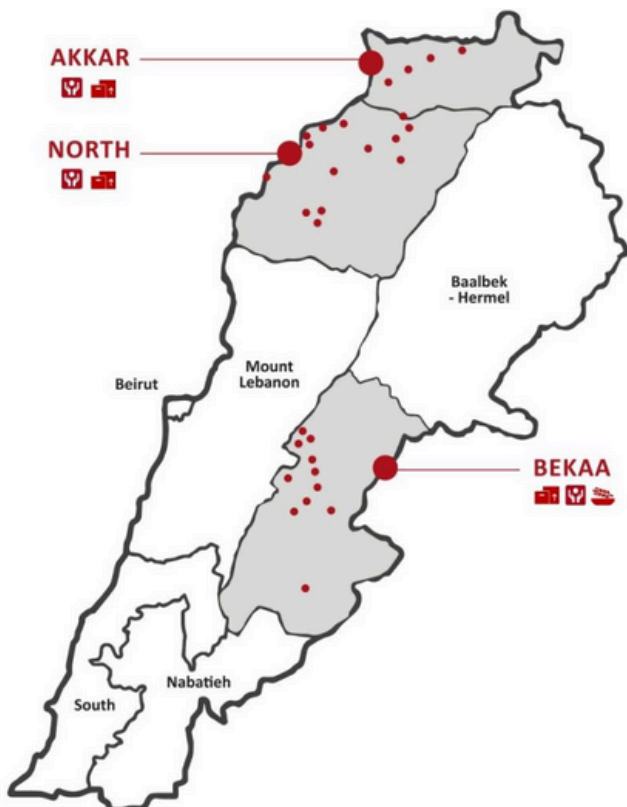
LEBANON

Basic Assistance: Since September 23rd, DRC's emergency response reached 9,772 individuals (1,628 households), with a significant increase in reach during the second week of operations (+78.5% increase). DRC field teams, supported by an ECHO-funded Crisis Modifier and DRC's own funds, distributed 1,297 mattresses, 808 pillows, 1,300 blankets, 94 litres of cleaning material, 35 cartons of small water bottles, and 84 hygiene kits across official sites in the North Governorate, Beqaa, and Akkar.

Food Security: DRC distributed 3,154 hot meals across 6 collective shelters in the Beqaa to support the nutritional needs of displaced individuals. Moving forward, DRC plans to continue providing hot meals for an additional week, transitioning to Ready-to-Eat (RTE) food parcels for individuals in both official and non-official shelters. The distribution strategy will include both dry food parcels and fresh produce.



Protection in Emergencies: Psychological First Aid (PFA) was provided in 6 official shelters, while recreational activities were offered in 5 shelters, aiming to alleviate the conditions of displaced people, especially children and youth. All individuals in collective shelters where DRC intervened received information on Gender-Based Violence (GBV), access to a hotline for emergencies, and GBV case management support for those in need. DRC will also continue to



provide legal support to help individuals replace or obtain civil documentation.

Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM): As more buildings are assessed and converted into official collective shelters, DRC will provide training to site managers to ensure that shelter conditions meet minimum standards. This includes providing essential safety and dignity items to maintain the facilities.

Humanitarian Disarmament & Peacebuilding (HDP): Leveraging its experience in mine action, DRC will conduct risk education sessions on explosive ordnance (EORE) within shelters and expand these efforts through a social media campaign. This initiative aims to reach vulnerable populations, especially in areas heavily impacted by airstrikes, to promote awareness and safer behaviors.

Emergency Cash Assistance (ECA): DRC disbursed cash assistance to 104 households currently displaced outside of official shelters, helping them meet their immediate needs and cope with the challenges of displacement.

Response Capacities: DRC is scaling up its emergency response by stocking Non-Food Items (NFI), Core Relief Items (CRI), and hygiene kits in its warehouses. Partnering with a local organisation in the North, DRC is distributing hot meals and RTE parcels while expanding operations in Akkar to address unmet needs.

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HDP: In September, significant progress was made in Humanitarian Mine Action efforts. Since May, REFORM has successfully reached 2,329 people, including 769 teenage boys and men and 1,533 teenage girls and women, through 159 in-person explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) sessions conducted in Khan Younis, Deir al-Balah, and northern Gaza. DRC carried out focus group discussions with community members, particularly targeting adult men, to tailor EORE materials to their specific needs and encourage safer behaviour. DRC and PARC are expanding their EORE programme to the West Bank, funded by Danida, to empower local communities and pilot cash assistance for EO victims.



CCCM / Shelter & Settlements: In September, PARC assessed 12 displacement sites in Deir al-Balah to prioritize interventions like solar lighting, water rehabilitation, and flood mitigation. Procurement of essential hygiene and shelter kits is underway, with plans to implement these activities in October. Challenges in procurement due to access restrictions have led to additional costs.



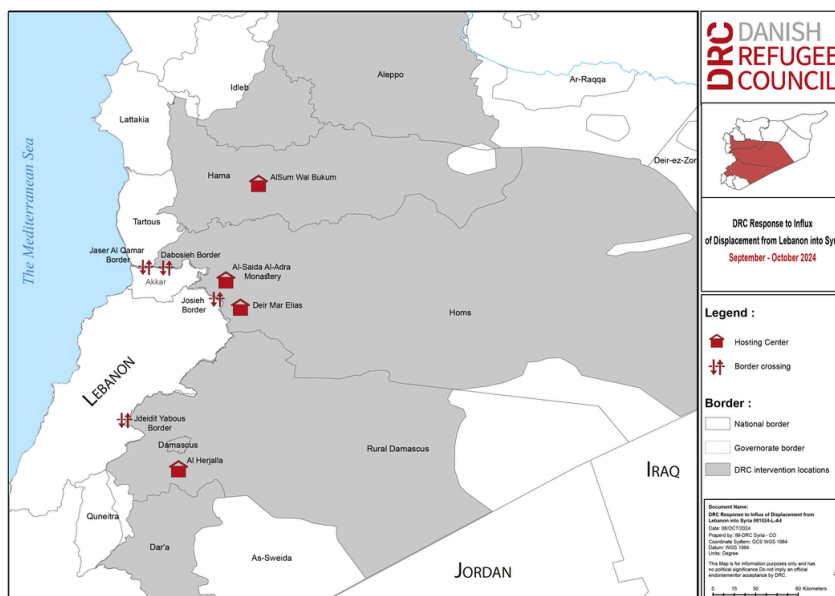
Protection: DRC and Humanity Crew initiated a partnership to provide Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for frontline workers in Gaza. DRC's partner, the Women's Affairs Centre (WAC), is providing MHPSS services to women and girls and offering case management for at-risk individuals. Despite operational challenges, protection monitoring continues, with plans to expand into the West Bank.

Economic Recovery & Food Security: DRC's partner, JHCO, prepared 2,708 dry food parcels for distribution in Gaza, pending COGAT approval. Fresh food parcels will also be distributed to food-insecure households. A comprehensive Economic Recovery Strategy is under development to address service gaps in food security and financial inclusion in Gaza and the West Bank.

Diaspora Engagement: DRC hired a consultancy firm to conduct a review of Palestinian diaspora organizations to enhance understanding of their role in emergency response and advocacy. This includes mapping diaspora groups and gathering key insights to strengthen DRC's collaborative efforts.

SYRIA

Basic Assistance: DRC has been actively providing core relief items at Dabosieh, Jaser Al Qamer, Jdeidit Yabous, and Josieh border crossings, as well as at the Deir Mar Elias, Deir Al-Saida Al-Adra, Hujellah, and AlSum Wal Bukum Hosting Centres. Distributions have included 9,250 pre-packaged food items, 4,175 water bottles, 365 On-the-Move kits, and support for 58 Psychological First Aid (PFA) cases.



Response Capacities:

- **At Border Crossings:** DRC will continue to distribute core relief items, including water bottles, pre-packaged food items, On-the-Move kits, and hygiene kits, to the most vulnerable populations arriving at the border. DRC Protection teams will also continue providing Psychological First Aid (PFA) to individuals displaying signs of trauma to help them cope with the immediate emotional impact of displacement.
- **In Hosting Centres:** DRC's efforts in Hosting Centres will focus on distributing essential items, including food, hygiene kits, dignity kits, and winterization kits. DRC will also prioritize the rehabilitation of facilities in these centres, enhancing WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services, creating Child-Friendly Spaces, and installing solar lights to improve living conditions. Protection services, including Psychosocial Support (PSS) and Case Management, will continue to be a core part of DRC's support to individuals in these shelters.
- **In Communities:** DRC plans to expand its distribution of core relief items, including winterization kits, to Syrians fleeing the conflict and vulnerable host community members. To further support these communities, DRC will provide ongoing PSS services and Case Management to address their mental health and protection needs. Medium-term plans include distributing Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) to help households meet their specific needs and rehabilitating water and sanitation networks to ease the burden on local infrastructure.



Early Recovery and Livelihood Support: In line with DRC's long-term strategy, the organisation will focus on supporting early recovery efforts for vulnerable host community members and displaced Syrians who intend to stay in Syria. This will include livelihoods support to enhance self-reliance and sustainable shelter assistance, specifically through the rehabilitation of partially damaged housing units.



ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS

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A media packet was released featuring visuals from the Beqaa and North Lebanon regions, showcasing DRC's response efforts, including the distribution of hot meals, Non-Food Items (NFIs), and other essential aid. The packet also contains a short video featuring DRC Lebanon's Head of Programme (HoP), explaining DRC Lebanon's initial response to the Israeli strikes. To amplify its message and reach a wider audience, DRC retweeted a post from [EU Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid](#), showcasing our EU funded work.

Despite the GoL led preparedness plan developed in coordination with the HCT since October 7th 2023, the plan was not ready to respond to a crisis of these dimensions. Official shelters are not sufficient to accommodate displaced people with no other viable options. Additionally, shelters are being granted only to Lebanese nationals and, in certain cases, there has been discrimination on displaced Lebanese based on religion. The lack of inclusion of displaced Syrian refugees, Palestinian Refugees from Syria, Palestinian refugees' migrants and others in the national emergency plans and strategies increases the risk of social tension and further escalation of communal conflicts, exacerbates vulnerability, prevents safe relocation to safer areas, gives ground to exploitation and contributes to instability.

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Ahead of the historic [UN General Assembly \(UNGA\) resolution](#) on September 18th, which called for an end to the occupation of Palestine, DRC joined other NGOs in issuing [a joint statement](#) urging member states to adhere to the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion. DRC's Secretary General expressed disappointment on social media ([Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)) regarding Denmark's decision to abstain from the resolution. Additionally, DRC's Secretary General attended a meeting in Washington, D.C., with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, where she raised concerns about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, reinforcing DRC's call for international support and accountability.

In early October, our partners produced a series of [testimonies](#) highlighting the living conditions and hardship experienced over the past year, and how it compares to before October 2023. A [statement](#) was issued by DRC to express the urgency to agree on a ceasefire and ensure aid reaches those in need.

The relentless Israeli bombardment of Gaza is causing mass death, destruction, and displacement in one of the world's most densely populated areas. Israel's repeated violations of humanitarian law are driving unnecessary suffering. A permanent ceasefire is the only way to protect civilians.

States must act beyond condemnation to ensure the cessation of violations of international humanitarian law in all conflicts and must do so consistently. The impact of double standards and impunity has long term far-reaching consequences, eroding the legitimacy of international law globally.

Civilians must receive humanitarian aid as required by international law. Reducing bureaucratic barriers is urgent, as they severely obstruct life-saving aid to Gaza. The closure of crossings, restricted aid routes, and lengthy screenings are drastically limiting aid delivery.

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DRC's advocacy efforts in Syria have focused on highlighting the urgent need for flexible funding and the protection of displaced populations in response to the ongoing influx from Lebanon. Key advocacy messages, developed in coordination with the Damascus INGO (DINGO) Forum and shared with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), emphasize the necessity of not linking the current displacement trends to large-scale returns to Syria. The messages stress the importance of adaptive programming to meet the evolving needs of new arrivals and those waiting to cross the borders.

DRC is advocating for enhanced coordination among humanitarian actors to ensure an effective and timely response to the growing crisis, with an estimated influx of over 480,000 people expected in the coming weeks. Protection risks for displaced populations, especially women, children, and older persons, are a priority, as these groups are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, trauma, and overcrowding in hosting centres. DRC is urging the international community to advocate for a ceasefire and ensure the safe passage of civilians seeking refuge.

The lack of civil documentation remains a significant issue for displaced Syrians, exacerbating their vulnerability to secondary displacement and exploitation. DRC is calling for a comprehensive legal framework to protect the rights of displaced persons and their property, as well as for the cessation of bombardments along the Syria-Lebanon border to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and civilians in these areas.