



DREF Review Report

Purpose:	Analysis of the Population Movement Lebanon Operation
Operation	Lebanon Aarsal Population Movement - MDRLB007
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Operation timeframe:	June – October 2019
Date of the Review	16-27 September 2019
Destination:	Beirut, Lebanon

Outstanding findings

As a highlight, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement coordination that took place is a case of best practice, where the different actors coordinate to map capacities and the different support that they can provide, and a joint decision is made to cover the remaining gaps through a DREF request.

Background

Situation

The Higher Defence Council announced in mid-April that informal settlements built by Syrian refugees with material other than timber and plastic sheeting must be dismantled before June 9, 2019. Following the announcement, a decision was taken by the Aarsal Municipality in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to enforce the announcement made by the Higher Defence Council. Aarsal is a remote town in the Bekaa Valley in Northern Lebanon, that has embraced and welcomed the largest number of Syrian refugees regardless of the negative effects the displacement has had on all the aspects of the town. This decision by the Higher Defence Council will have an impact on around 4,000 households who live in informal tent settlements (ITS) built with material other than timber and plastic in Aarsal (Rose1, 2019).

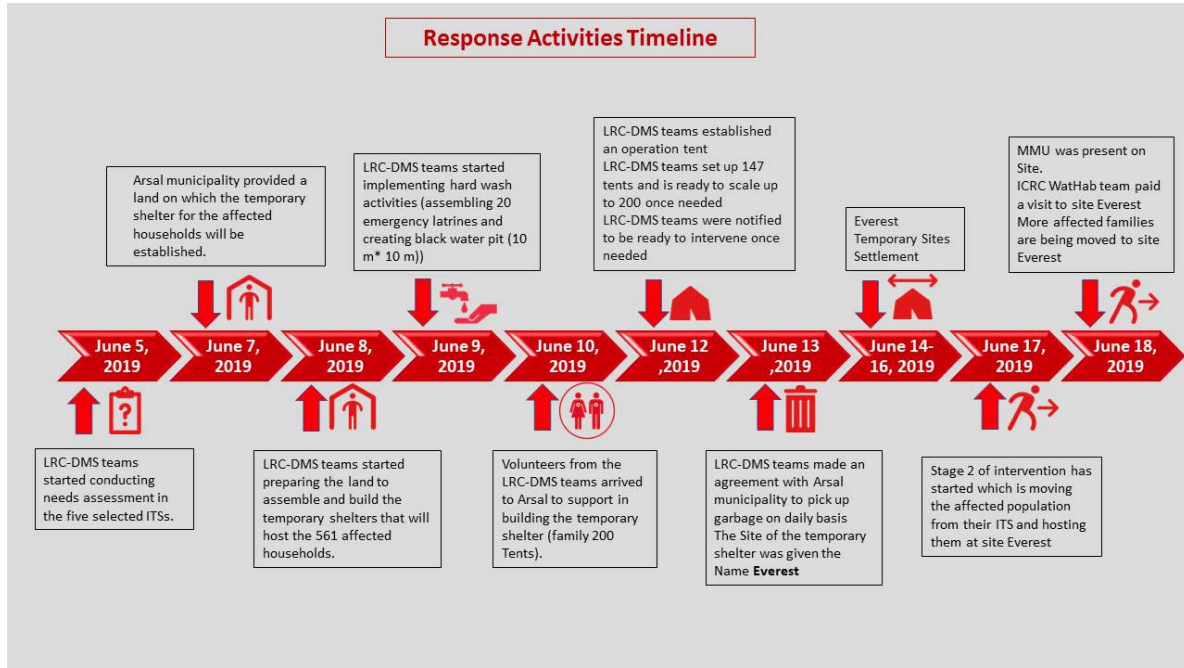
The planned demolitions started June 9, 2019 and involved around 4,000 Syrian households and see as many as 15,000 children face homelessness, severely impacting their mental and physical wellbeing.

Eight years into the crisis, the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are facing more difficulties in meeting their basic survival needs, in part due to the decline of international support. This support included providing food and non-food items, WASH, Cash, Health, Shelter and Winterization services to people in need. According to the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VaSYR) 2017¹, **58% of households are living in extreme poverty**, while **76% of total refugee households are living below the poverty line** and thus spending less than \$4 per day. According to the VaSYR 2017, released by the UN Refugee Agency, the reasons aforementioned have resulted in some people to incorporate negative coping strategies in order to provide for their families. With such living conditions and Lebanon's weak infrastructure and public services, the chances of Syrian and Lebanese communities meeting their social, economic, and medical needs continue to diminish.

¹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>



Operation



Under this DREF operation, the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) established tented temporary shelter, and supported 561 households in total, divided into 3 consecutive rotations (200+200+161) (the temporary shelter had enough capacity to withstand the volume of a maximum of 200 tents, thus several rotations were required). The LRC temporary shelter hosted the households who decide to dismantle their semi-permanent shelter. Each rotation capacity accommodated 200 families in the temporary shelter with the provision of their basic needs for 5 days, which is the time needed for the refugees to dismantle their settlements, clean the debris, and rebuild according to required standards using the shelter kits provided by LRC. LRC also supported in these cleaning and construction phases by providing daily workers and through their volunteers and staff. LRC also established or repaired latrines as needed for the re-established settlements at the ITS.

The support was provided through a movement-wide intervention, and included:

Emergency Shelter/ Non-food Items

- Temporary camp – Set and operated by the LRCS
- Distribution of food items and good baskets – Supported by the German Red Cross
- Provision of 560 shelter kits – 520 provided by the ICRC through pre agreements with suppliers and 30 provided by the Qatar Red Crescent through prepositioned stock.
- Procurement and distribution of 1,000 sleeping mats (2 per household)
- Cleaning of debris at ITS



Water and sanitation

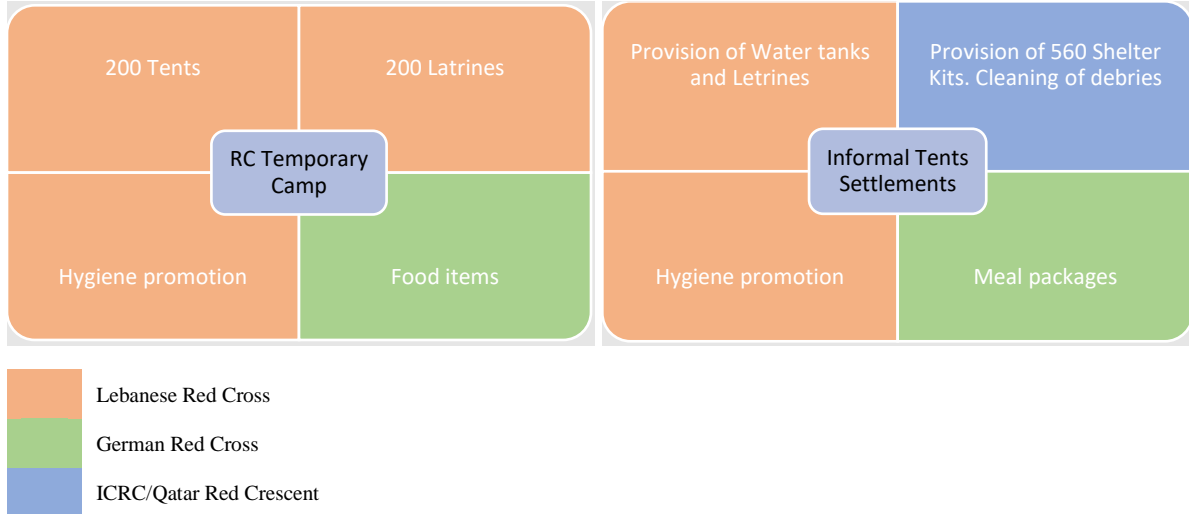
- Provision of water tanks and stands for 561 families – LRCS supported by DREF
- Building 200 latrines in Temporary camp – LRCS Supported by DREF
- Repair 561 Latrines at ITS – LRCS supported by DREF
- Hygiene promotion at temporary camp and ITS - LRCS supported by DREF



Livelihoods and basic needs

- Provision of hot meals and food basket – Supported by the German Red Cross

Movement-wide intervention



Purpose of the review

- Analyse the dynamics and timeline that lead to the need for an intervention in support of those affected in the Aarsal Informal Tents Settlement, against the reaction of the Lebanese Red Cross
- Explain the role of the DREF tool in complex population movement emergency
- Explain the impact of the intervention of the Lebanese Red Cross

Methodology

This DREF review was coordinated between the IFRC MENA Regional Office, evaluators from the DREF team and the Lebanese Red Cross. Information was gathered through:

- Meeting with key informants of the Lebanese Red Cross, both at HQ level from the Disaster Management Department as well as from the Branch involved in the Response.
- Meeting with Movement Partners, including the Netherlands Red Cross, German Red Cross and ICRC.
- A site visit for direct observation and meetings with key informants such as:
 - Persons that received services during the intervention from two camp sites
 - Community leaders from two camps sites
 - Major of the Aarsal Municipality

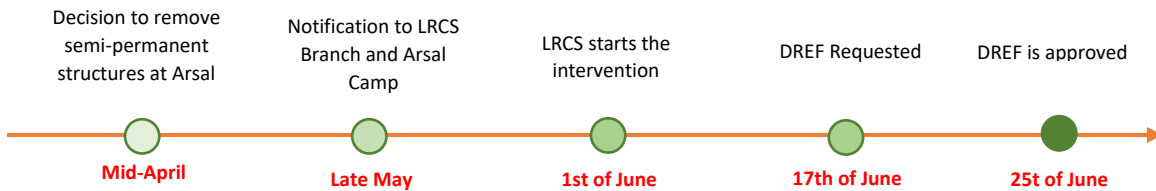
Observations

Trigger of the operation

- The EpoA submitted explains that the decision of the Government to remove the semi-permanent structures at the Aarsal camp was taken in mid-April, and this was considered the trigger date for the response, making the request a late one, as the operation was approved until the 25th of June.
- After the field visits, it was possible to corroborate with the municipality and the members of the Branch that the decision was informed to the area until the second half of May.



- The LRCS activates its support once the branch is notified and communicates to HQ the situation and the need for additional support.
- The LRCS provided support to those affected since the first week of June, with the establishment of the temporary shelter.
- Based on this information and taking into account that the Red Cross activates once they information was received in the field; a key learning is the need to consider the local dynamics when considering the trigger date for a specific disaster or crisis. In this operation, although the decision by the Government was taken in around mid-April, the NS cannot act on it until the information is received, in this case on the ground, which happened one month later.



DREF as a tool to cover operational gaps

- In Lebanon, there is an important presence of Movement partners, with approximately 17 Partner National Societies, as well as the ICRC and the IFRC Country Office, as well as MENA Regional Office
- Through the Review is evident that there is a close Movement Coordination, where issues are discussed during coordination meetings and decisions were made jointly, like the decision to request a DREF, which was made during a coordination meeting after discussion the possible support partners would provide to support the situation in Arsal, and once the gaps were identified a discussion to cover them through a DREF took place. This constitutes a best practice in terms of decision making for this type of context.

Overall impact of the operation

Community engagement

- The selection of the targeted population was done in coordination with local authorities and other actors in the field (around 35 organisations), where the totality of the camps were divided between all actors. The LRC provided support to 6 sites in total.
- Community leaders involved in the decision-making processes, and constant communication channels between the leaders and the National Society.
- No formal mechanisms to collect and gather community feedback, although community members said they felt the trust to reach out to volunteers about any complain.

Impact of the intervention

- Those that received support from the LRC through this operation have said that they consider the services provided timely, especially the temporary camp, and the shelter kits which were available right after they were done dismantling the previous semi-permanent structures. The temporary camp allowed for families to have a place to stay while other members were working in the dismantling. In some cases, it could take up to 15 days to completely dismantle the structures.
- Volunteers were well received and appreciated by the population that were provided with services. It could take until 15 days to dismantle the semi-permanent structure.



Recommendations

For IFRC

- When analysing the trigger of certain disaster or crisis, especially for manmade crisis, to consider the context dynamics and information flows between the different levels (local, national).

For LRCS

- Ensure the inclusion of a community engagement and accountability mechanism for emergency response.
- Now that the shelter structures in Aarsal are based on materials such as wood and tarpaulins, the winterisation needs in the area will be higher than in previous years. The LRC needs to keep the coordination with partners to ensure preparations to support the refugees in the camps during the winter season.
- Long term programmes should be coordinated with the Branch in the area to ensure the continuous support to the vulnerable population in Aarsal, especially through a cash mechanism.
- The LRC needs to consider Cash and Voucher Assistance as a principal mechanism for assistance for future DREF operations.