

Municipalities on the Frontline

The effects of the Syrian Crisis on local government in bordering countries (Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon)

Mission report and recommendations, May 2013

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Background

At the initiative of UCLG President Topbaş (Annex 1) and under the auspices of the Middle East Working Group, an international delegation of elected officials from French, Turkish, and Dutch local governments and experts from the national associations of local governments in Canada (FCM - Federation of Canadian Municipalities), The Netherlands (VNG - Netherlands Association of Municipalities), Turkey (UMT - Union of Municipalities of Turkey), United Cities France (CUF - Cités Unies France), Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and the UCLG Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA) visited border municipalities coping with the flow of displaced Syrians in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan from March 18 to 26, 2013.

The international delegation met local, regional and central government officials, non-government organization (NGO) representatives and French and Dutch diplomats as well as representatives of the Syrian community (Annex 2). The team (Annex 3) surveyed how local governments in each country near the border with Syria are coping with their situations. This report provides the findings and recommendations (both situation specific and generic) for assistance that could be offered through the UCLG network.

1.2 Summary Findings

As of May 13, 2013, though government estimates are higher, UNHCR reported there were 1,472,389 displaced Syrians in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq. Half of the 329,466 Syrian citizens who have fled to Turkey live in government-run camps while the other half live in host cities. In Jordan, more than 460,950 Syrians are concentrated in the UN-supported Al Za'atari camp and host communities. In Lebanon, 462,661 refugees are spread throughout the 900 municipalities in the country since no camps exist. Local governments have needs in each country though they are different.

Turkey

The country was very well prepared for the emergency given its extensive experience in disaster preparedness and response. Turkish culture and values motivate citizens to help and share all they can with their neighbours regardless of ethnic or religious background and this is happening. In addition, the Turkish Union of Municipalities has provided resource mobilization and coordination support for their members during the crisis.

The Government of Turkey built and manages seventeen (17) refugee camps adjacent to eight (8) cities and also registration of urban refugees. Priority is given to placing the wounded, widows, pregnant women and children presently. The camps are generally well organized and offer many services but this does vary from camp to camp.

In March, about 16,000 people were at the border - this is where people are in real distress. While there is a "safe zone" on the Syrian side of the border where only the Red Crescent and some NGOs are trying to deliver services to displaced Syrians, people are sleeping in the open and there is a typhus and smallpox epidemic.

Turkish local governments state they are "coping with the burden" due to the national government's support but beginning to feel the strain, particularly along the border areas where refugees have selected to stay independently and in communities adjacent to the seventeen (17) refugee camps. Municipalities are setting up resource centres to register refugees who have chosen not to go to the camps and direct them to services such as shelter, food and clothing, medical care, education and other services. Many Turkish families have voluntarily "adopted" a Syrian family or provided them with accommodation at no cost and NGOs have been engaged to help provide services. Authorities advised the delegation that technical assistance is not needed at this time. However, there is an urgent need for ambulances, fire trucks, garbage trucks and transport vehicles. Turkish officials feel other countries are not paying enough attention to the Syrian crisis and that "it is everyone's responsibility to help stop the war". More than fifty (50) delegations have visited the camps but very little follow-up or support has materialized. The municipality of Islahiye received no less than 180 delegations.

Jordan

Already a poor country relying heavily on resources to balance its budget from the USA and the Gulf States, Jordan is struggling to cope and authorities are worried about the economic impact of the refugee crisis. Fuel and housing prices have gone up and competition for jobs, education and health services is testing Jordanian hospitality, especially as refugee numbers grow. It is estimated that the total number of Syrians in Jordan getting close to 500,000. So far, Jordanians remain sympathetic to their Syrian guests, but there are worries that economic problems could mutate into political tension. Many refugees choose not to register for a camp placement but to live in urban centres, adding to Jordan's financial burden.

Initially, refugees managed to find their own accommodation but when numbers mushroomed last summer, Jordan opened a camp at Al Za'atari and declared future refugees would have to live in organized camps. Conditions in this tent city are grim. Located on windswept, dusty barren land where temperatures can be very low and very hot, within weeks of opening, Al Za'atari witnessed a riot by refugees complaining about living conditions. By March of 2013, the camp had 25,000 families, totalling 100,000 people. In population terms, Al Za'atari is now the fourth largest community in Jordan. As the camp is close to full capacity, the government of Jordan is now planning new camps.

The most pressing camp needs are water, waste management and sanitation, medicines and medical services, security and generally, improved camp management and services. UNHCR would like to shift from a supply driven model to a refugee demand driven model and would welcome local government specialists to help improve camp administration, management and services.

This includes establishing a sustainable water system, proper waste management system, local planning, zoning and licensing, setting up/maintaining a civil registration and cadaster system and improving refugee participation through an elected camp council and committees comprising women and men.

Local governments affected by the influx of Syrians are under considerable pressure and faced with accumulated debt. Non-governmental organizations help refugees, but seem blind to the needs of municipalities. Municipality needs are many: cash assistance/budget support, waste management (compressors, trucks, bins), drinking water (technical “know how”, wells, water storage tanks), more WASH facilities inside municipalities, education support (buildings, toilets, computers), assistance to Jordanian host communities (how to “support the supporters”), psychological support programs and strategies for communicating and reaching out to and involve refugees. Similar to Turkey, many delegations from abroad have visited but few promises of assistance have materialized.

Lebanon

Since 1948, the country has hosted Palestinian refugees, more than 400,000 presently. More than half live in twelve (12) camps managed by the United Nations. There have been many incidences of tensions between the Palestinian refugees and host communities.

Displaced Syrians fleeing to Lebanon arrive in a difficult context. Although currently the Government of Lebanon maintains an open border, it has not allowed the establishment of camps resulting in an estimated one (1) million displaced Syrians residing in 980 communities in the six (6) governorates of the country. Most Syrians were already displaced in their own country so they arrive exhausted and without resources. Lebanese officials emphasized promises of financial support have not fully materialized yet (only 32% of the \$1.6 billion USD dollars committed). There is no systematic registration and coordination among municipalities, NGOs and UN agencies is lacking, UNHCR delivers aid to registered refugees through their own and NGO agencies. All authorities emphasized that refugees are reluctant to register because they fear repression.

The situation of urban refugees varies according to several factors including their location in Lebanon, their economic situation and the size of the city or town in which they are living. The regions of Akkar, Hermel and the majority of northern and western Bekaa where most of the refugees are concentrated already suffer economically: low income, high unemployment, weak physical, health services and education infrastructure.

Local Government services have been deeply affected. Local governments can register and provide services to refugees but authorities are severely constrained partly because there have been no fiscal transfers from national government for three (3) years. Local governments need significant financial, technical and material support: technical support to manage basic services and improve coordination and partnerships with NGOs and UN agencies and material support includes ambulances, garbage trucks, garbage containers, water pumps and electricity production materials.

2 Report of visit to Turkey

2.1 Introduction

The Republic of Turkey (population 80,700,000) was the first country neighbouring Syria to formally respond to the influx of Syrian refugees when the Government of Turkey (GoT) declared and began implementing a temporary protection regime in April 2011. The regime is recognized under International Refugee Law and is based on the core elements of an open border policy, no forced return, no limit of duration of stay in Turkey, protection under international refugee principles and the possibility of obtaining assistance in the camps.

Accordingly, the GoT maintains an open border policy, enabling refugees to receive assistance and protection in camps set up and run by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) while allowing some Syrian refugees to join Turkish relatives or to reside independently in Turkish cities.

Seven provinces are hosting Syrian refugees: Hatay, Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Kahramanmaras, Adiyaman and Osmaniye. As of March 2013, the number of refugees in fourteen (14) camps stands at more than 200,000 and is growing daily. The estimated number of Syrians living outside camps is at least 70,000. By UN estimates, close to 400,000 Syrians will be in Turkey by June 2013.

Under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the operational leadership of AFAD nationally and provincially, refugee support is provided in collaboration with the Red Crescent, local authorities, non-government organizations and the private sector. To date, Turkey has spent almost \$1 billion US with very little additional outside assistance.¹

For information about the United Nations plan for Turkey and other affected countries, see the *Syria Regional Response Plan: January to June 2013* at www.unhcr.org

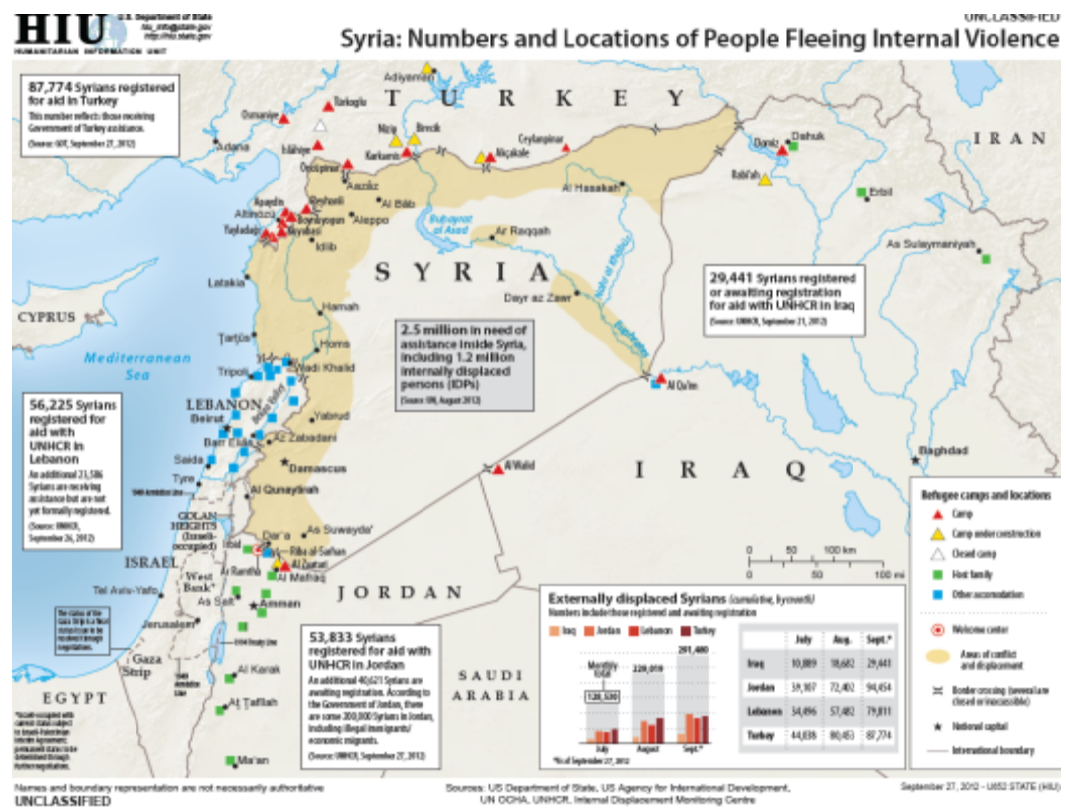
2.2 Mission Activities

The delegation was comprised of members from the UCLG Middle East and West Asia (MEWA) Branch, the Union of Municipalities of Turkey and elected officials and technical specialists from France, the Netherlands and Canada. Following an initial meeting with the Vice Mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality who met the delegation on behalf of the President of UCLG, Mayor Kadir Topbas, the delegation visited local authorities and camps in two southwest provinces, Gaziantep and Hatay.

¹ Data in this section obtained from the Syria Regional Response Plan: January to June 2013; United Nations

Briefings took place with the governors and district governors of Gaziantep and Hatay (Antakya) provinces, AFAD provincial coordinators, the Union of Municipalities of Turkey and the mayors of the cities of Gaziantep, Islahiye, Antakya and Altinozu, a district center in Hatay province about twenty (20) kilometers from the Turkey/Syrian border with a population of 7400. Site visits were made to a city refugee resource coordination center, a new school for 1000 Syrian students in Gaziantep, a Syrian urban refugee family, an Islamic NGO that provides services to about 500 urban refugee families, and two camps – Islahiye and Altinozu which is only 20 kilometers from the Turkey-Syria border.

Although the numbers are dated, the map below illustrates the refugee migration geography in the region including in the provinces visited in southwest Turkey.



2.3 Summary Findings

Turkey is an important country bridging Asia and Europe and Turks had an essential role in the history of humanity roaming three continents of the world - Asia, Europe and Africa - for two thousand (2000) years. One Turkish values study notes that the culture places high value on collectivism and scores high in values of hierarchy, conservatism, egalitarian commitment and harmony. Helping others is also a strong value of Islam. This understanding of Turkish values explains the remarkable generosity the delegation witnessed in the communities visited.

Turkey is a developed nation with a strong government and capacity to provide services and financing. The country experiences regular internal “emergencies” – ten (10) since 2004: earthquakes, landslides, floods – and over time, has developed strong emergency preparedness and response expertise. Officials interviewed stated that when this emergency occurred, “we were ready”.

Officials told us more than 3.5 million Syrians are displaced. The GoT built and manages the 17 refugee camps adjacent to eight (8) cities with virtually no NGO or UN technical assistance to this point. But they also say no technical assistance is needed at this time. The GoT is also handling urban refugee registration.

Locally, as the situation of these refugees become more critical, local authorities are setting up resource centres to register and direct refugees in urban communities to services such as shelter, food and clothing, medical care and education. Local authorities and NGOs assist with providing these services.

The Syria-Turkey Border: Traditionally, people have freely moved back and forth across the border given the strong historical, cultural and family ties. For example, many people speak Turkish in Aleppo. We did not visit the border so did not receive a full picture of how much communities and local authorities along the border have been affected by those Syrians coming across illegally and settling there. We were told there are no international observers at the border.

We learned there are about 16,000 people waiting at the border and there is a “safe zone” on the Syrian side of the border where only the Red Crescent and some NGOs are trying to deliver services to displaced Syrians there. We also heard people are sleeping in the open and an epidemic of typhus and smallpox has started. This is where people are in real distress.

There are two border crossings through which Syrians can enter Turkey legally (with passports/ID). Refugees are also entering illegally when they do not have identification. Refugees who come into the country legally are assigned to camps where every service is provided or if they choose, they may go to communities where they have family or friends. These people may or may not have financial means, e.g. to rent accommodation, buy food, etc. In fact, since the conflict has continued for more than two years now, we heard of many families that have or are running out of resources that they brought with them.

Urban Refugees: There are approximately 20,000 to 25,000 refugees in the City of Gaziantep (about 100 km from Aleppo). Gaziantep just opened a school for 1000 students and Syrian teachers both in this urban-based school and in the camps teach the Syrian curriculum. This facility was very impressive and children looked happy and engaged. Another 1000 children are waiting for education facilities and authorities are working on this. Adult education classes are also held including Turkish language training. Men and women of all ages attend these classes.

Just last week, authorities in Gaziantep province began registering urban refugees who are entitled to services mandated by the United Nations. Cities in Hatay province have not yet started this process so exact numbers are not known in all communities.

Many Turkish families have voluntarily “adopted” a Syrian family or provided them with accommodation (empty houses) at no cost. We visited such a family with ten children – the eleventh on the way – and it was clear they have little and are under considerable stress. With registration, they will now be eligible for free services. NGOs have been engaged to provide basics such as food and clothing. The leader of an Islamic NGO we visited described how the community and many others in Turkey have collected and sent clothes and funds to help in this regard.



Syrian schoolchildren in Gaziantep

2.4 Camp Refugees

Turkey is giving priority to the wounded, widows, pregnant women and children at the present time.

Islahiye Tent City: Opened in March 13, 2010 and now has more than 9000 people (2480 men mostly over 50, 1954 women, 2529 boys and 2312 girls). Everything possible is provided by the GoT: accommodation (tents), 24 hour electricity and heating in winter, three meals a day, health and psychological support services, access to religious services, clothing, baby diapers, hygiene/laundry (solar energy), 16 classes ranging from kindergarten to senior secondary school, women’s programs (hairdressing), handicrafts, language training, sports facilities, access to telephones and internet, transport to nearest urban area and border and security.

There are even guest tents for relatives who wish to visit. Children are taken on excursions including to the zoo, museums etc. The cost per refugee is currently about \$20.00 US per day.



The mayor of İslahiye and the delegation members

Atinozu Refugee Camp (Village of Atinozu about 20 kms from the border): This is a unique camp in that it is set up in and around an old two story concrete tobacco factory that has been refitted drywall into fairly small two room family spaces. It has many of the same services as described above but is more crowded, fewer services and facilities are much more modest. This camp holds 3,853 people (1327 men – 50% over 50 years of age, 897 women, 856 boys and 773 girls).

More than fifty (50) delegations have visited the cities but very little follow-up or support materialized. Some examples were given: Libyan businessmen donated about \$96,000 US for tents, Norway provided \$1,650,000 US and was asked to send more funds but there has been no word. The Saudi King provided an ambulance and arranged for sugar and rice but it rotted enroute. UNHCR and Turkey have recently signed a protocol but are not on the ground yet.

Discussions with the refugees including Syrian leaders in the Atinozu Camp provided a grim picture of the situation in Syria. Everyone just wants the conflict to end in peace and go home even if it means completely rebuilding their communities.

Legal Constraints: Syrians do not have legal status to work in Turkey; newborn children have no legal identify documents and no insurance to cover medical needs although the refugees are currently provided free care at State hospitals.

Protection and Security: Officials report there have been no major conflicts between community and refugees and the GoT is providing security for refugees. The Turkish people are very hospitable and treat Syrians as “guests” and Turkey has committed to protecting the refugees while in the country and supporting them to return home when the time comes. They have also stated that if Syrians wish to stay after the conflict, they will embrace them in their communities and country.

Pressures on Local Economies: Except for some negative effects on tourism in certain parts of the country, there has been no real effect on the economy. Turkey exports to more than 100 countries and has a low unemployment rate. Trade between Turkey and Syria was not a major factor in the economy because of the high tariffs on Turkish goods so there was little trade between the countries. This has, however, gone up 500% because the regime is buying goods. A few shopkeepers (paint stores, shoemakers) have been negatively impacted.

Local Government Services and Needs: Surprisingly, the local authorities we met said they were coping fairly well given their own resources and the extensive support and contributions of AFAD. They stated city/town services were only somewhat impacted at this time and except for additional equipment, did not have many requests for support. Obviously, this varies depending on the size of the local government/community. In general, infrastructure (roads, water support, waste management etc.) is well developed. Some local government officials from Aleppo are working with the City of Gaziantep: Turkey is providing refugees with a high standard of support. The only request from local authorities at this point is material: ambulances, fire trucks, garbage trucks and vehicles to transport refugees from camps to towns/cities and to and from the border since many travel back and forth to Syria were mentioned several times.

The Union of Municipalities of Turkey: This is a well-established national association of local authorities with 100 staff and 2900 members that is assisting with the current situation by fostering and facilitating inter-municipal support. For example, a 100 tons of lard and pasta was mobilized for affected communities in the south. They are currently trying to find ten (10) new or used garbage trucks and ambulances. Used vehicles could be refurbished more cheaply in Turkey.

The Union is also working on setting up a “center” within the association focused on local government emergency preparedness and response. Such a facility/capacity could identify and communicate local government needs (where and how much) quickly. We also held discussions about how UCLG could undertake a similar initiative to support local governments with emergency preparedness and response globally.

Call for Solidarity and Assistance from the International Local Government Community: With the growing number of refugees streaming into Turkey, there is an urgent need, and the delegation consistently heard the request from all government levels and from Syrians themselves, for international solidarity and burden-sharing with Turkey and its local government host communities that are closest to the border and have been directly affected by the conflict in Syria.

After the War: Local authorities in both Gaziantep and Hatay offered assistance in future reconstruction efforts. The delegation learned that Turkish local authorities met with Syrian counterparts in 2007 to discuss a new local government law but the conflict stopped the process.



Children in Islahiye Camp, Turkey

2.5 Summary

- The region is under tremendous stress (Arab spring, ongoing tensions between Israel and other countries, Syrian conflict for the last three years)
- There are now more than 3.5 million displaced Syrians with 1 million in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq
- Turkey was very well prepared for the emergency given its extensive experience in disaster preparedness and response and in fact, is capable and prepared to share their experience with the international community
- Turkish culture and values motivate citizens to help and share all they can with their neighbours regardless of ethnic or religious background

- Local governments are under pressure, particularly along the border areas, in cities and towns where refugees have independently selected to stay and in communities adjacent to the seventeen (17) refugee camps.
- Local governments in Turkey state they are “coping with the burden” due to the national government’s support but beginning to feel the strain.
- Officials believe other countries are not paying enough attention and that it is everyone’s responsibility to help stop the war.
- Therefore, Turkey is appealing to the international local government community to:
 - Urgently make every effort to bring the situation to the attention of the world leaders (the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the European Union, national and local governments, the non government community and also the private sector) and advocate for an end to the conflict;
 - Assist local authorities with specific material support (ambulances, fire trucks, transport, i.e. vans and garbage trucks)
 - Maintain contact with Syrian municipalities who will need help with reconstruction and, in the longer term, with developing a democratic local government system.

2.6 Quotes

- “It is our humble duty to help and share what we have with the refugees and others in need as we have done in Haiti, Indonesia, Pakistan and other places in the world”.
- “Pain lessens when you share it. Love grows when you share it”.
- On the amount of funds spent by Turkey already: “its not about the numbers, its about what you do”.

3 Report of visit to Jordan

3.1 Introduction

Jordan is positioned at the centre of the Middle East. It became independent on 25 May 1946. It is a constitutional monarchy: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It has a population of about 6.5 million according to July 2012 estimations. The area of Jordan is 92,300 sq km. Jordan branches of government include: the executive branch where the King is the Chief of State and the Prime Minister is appointed by the King to run the affairs of the state; The Legislative branch, is a bicameral national assembly: The House of notables, which has 55 seats and is appointed by the King, and the House of representatives, which has 110 seats elected by popular vote; the Judicial branch includes the court of Cassation, and the Supreme Court-Court of Final Appeal.

Jordan is divided into 12 governorates: Ajlun, AL 'Aqabah, Al Balqa, Al-Kark, Al Mafrq, Amman, Al Tafilah, Az Zarqa, Irbid, Jarash, Ma'an, and Madaba. Amman is a special case as, while under the Law of Municipalities, it is treated differently in terms of appointment of the Mayor and financial resources.

Local governance and municipalities were established decades ago and developed over the years. Irbid was the first municipality established in the year 1881. At the beginning of the century the number of municipalities reached more than 300.

Now they are merged together to and reduces to 93 municipalities.²

Administrative Structure

Local administration in Jordan is composed of 93 municipalities and they are all connected to the central government. There is no hierarchal relationship among municipalities neither with other government's agencies. However, the capital city Amman, where the central government is located, is connected to the prime Minister and possesses a different statute from that of other municipalities. There are no clear laws and legislations that identify exactly the roles of the municipalities and the roles of the central government via the governors.

The Mayor and municipal council members are elected except in the city Amman. In Amman the mayor and half of the council are still appointed. The municipalities have limited influence on political issues, given that most of their responsibilities are limited to service-orientated tasks. Also the central government would not allow them to intervene in political debates.

² Author unknown, 'The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan', UCLG Country Profiles, http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/gold/Upload/country_profile/Jordan.pdf, p 1.

Relationship between Central Government and Local Authorities

In 1965 the central government established a Ministry of Municipal Affairs in order to give some responsibilities to the locals. The Minister of Municipal Affairs is entitled to point out a Municipal Director to work alongside the Mayor. The Municipal Director is responsible for the day-to-day administration and management of the municipalities. This means that municipalities are not independent bodies, as they are supervised by the central government.³



General reaction to the influx of Syrian refugees

Jordan has taken in Syrian refugees since the beginning of the uprising. Deraa, where protesters first clashed with the forces of President Bashar al-Assad in March 2011, is barely 6 kilometres from the border and shares familial and tribal links with the neighbouring Jordanian Houran region.

The first refugees were mostly people from Deraa seeking refuge with extended family, but as the violence spread Syrians from further afield – Damascus, Homs and Hama – headed south. Most arrive with shocking stories of Assad's brutality. Crossing the border is no easy task. The Jordanian army has clashed with Syrian troops to prevent them firing on fleeing refugees.

³ Author unknown, 'The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan', UCLG Country Profiles, http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/gold/Upload/country_profile/Jordan.pdf, pp 2-3.

While wealthier refugees have managed to find their own accommodation, officially sanctioned charities have been essential over the past years in finding homes for poorer Syrians, given Jordan's initial reluctance to build refugee camps. But things rapidly changed with refugee numbers mushrooming in the summer of 2012 to more than 180,000, according to the Jordanian government. It opened a camp in Za'atari in late July 2012, and a new law declared that any future Syrian refugees would have to live in organized camps. Conditions in this tent city are grim. Located on windswept barren land, where temperatures can be (very) low and very hot, Za'atari witnessed a riot by refugees complaining about living conditions within weeks of opening. In March of 2013, more than 160,000 refugees had officially registered themselves at Al Za'atari. Estimates are that the camp is now inhabited by some 25,000 families, totalling 100,000 people. Tens of thousands of people have left the camp sometime after they registered. In population terms, Al Za'atari is now the fifth largest community in Jordan. As the camp is close to full capacity, the government of Jordan is now planning new camps. The Azraq camp, with a projected number of inhabitants of 130,000 is supposed to be opened in June of this year.



Al Za'atari Camp, Jordan

Jordan is struggling to cope in many respects. Already a poor country relying heavily on money from the US and the Gulf to balance its budget, Jordan is worried about the economic impact of the refugee crisis. Many refugees, fearing the reach of Syria's intelligence service even in exile, choose not to register for a camp and live outside, adding to Jordan's financial burden.

So far Jordanians remain sympathetic to their Syrian guests. But there are worries that economic problems could mutate into political tension. Competition for resources such as jobs, education and health services test the Jordanians' hospitality, especially now that refugee numbers continue to grow. Links between Syrian refugees and Islamists worry Amman. The potential for the destabilization of Jordan grows with every refugee crossing its border.



Members of the delegation meet Syrian local leaders in Al Za'atari Camp, Jordan

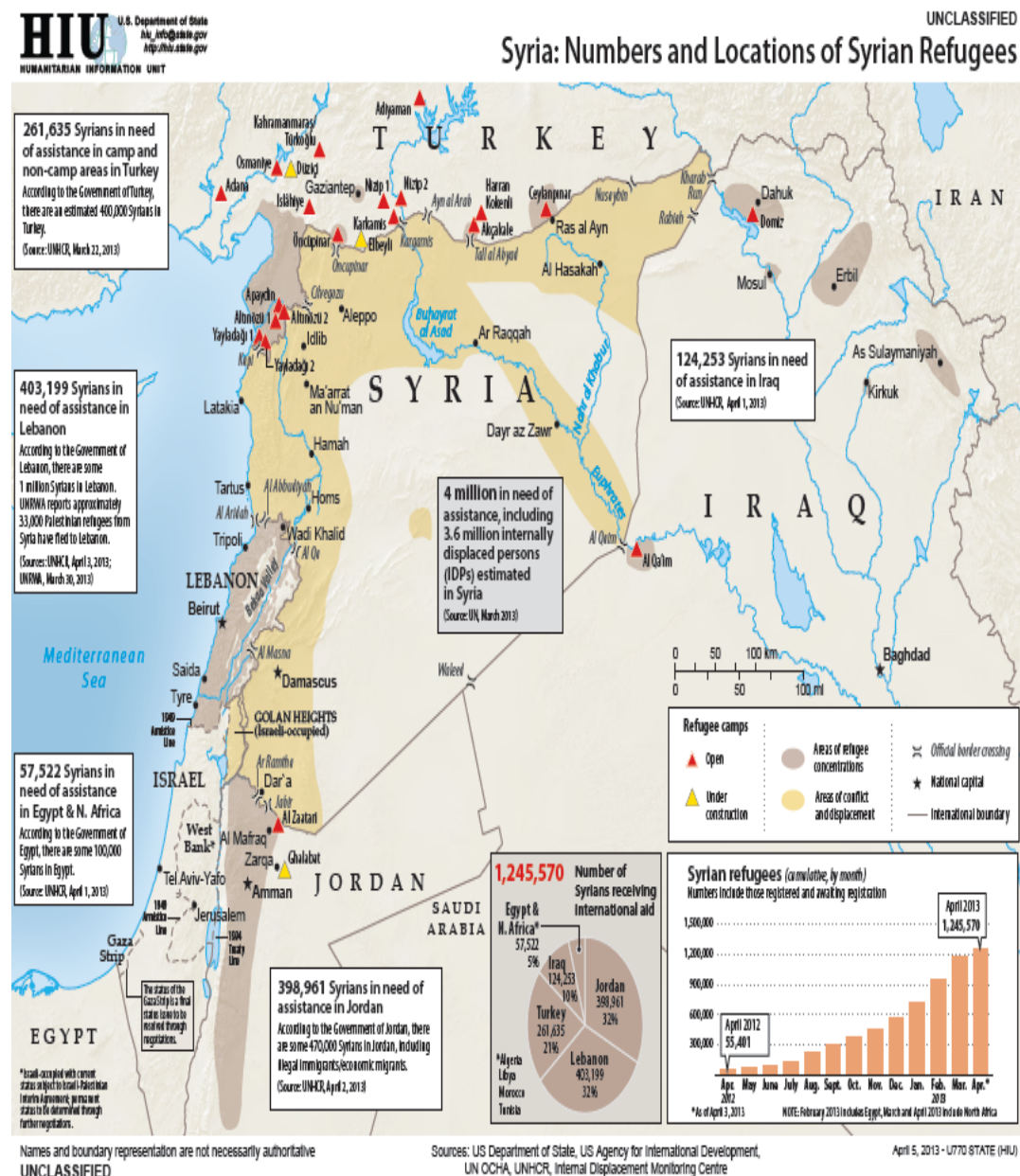
3.2 Mission Activities

The delegation was comprised of members from the UCLG Middle East and West Asia (MEWA) Branch, the Union of Municipalities of Turkey and elected officials and technical specialists from France, the Netherlands and Canada.

Throughout our stay in Jordan, our delegation was supported by members of ACTED (Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique Et au Développement). ACTED is a globally operating aid agency, established in Paris in 1996. In Jordan, their 'on camp' activities are water, waste and community development related (UNICEF funded), their 'off camp' activities are water and sanitation related.

On Saturday the 23rd, the delegation visited the Al Za'atari Camp and talked to tribal leaders, camp inhabitants and to the UNHCR camp management. Subsequently, visits to the Governorate of Mafraq and the municipality of Sahel Houran (directly bordering Syria) took place. In Sahel Houran (Turra), we spoke with the mayor and with representatives of the Syrian community.

On Sunday the 24th, we visited the Governorate of Irbid. We spoke with the head of Irbid municipality and with directors of a number of departments in the Governorate (e.g. Health, Education).



3.3 Summary Findings

Urban refugees

Syrians enter Jordan via Irbid and Mafraq governorates. In the beginning, many of them entered legally and managed to find a place to stay with Jordanian relatives, mostly in northern Jordan (cities and villages in Mafraq governorates). Lately, most Syrians have entered Jordan illegally. Jordanian authorities allow Syrians without passports to enter Jordan. UNHCR registers these refugees. The Jordanian authorities are planning transit camps on the Syrian border.

In the afternoon of Saturday the 23rd of March, we talked to Mahmood Ehsaad, the deputy Governor of Mafraq. According to Ehsaad, the pressure on the service capacity of Mafraq city and surrounding villages is tremendous. The population of Mafraq city is 125.000, and apparently, the 'locals' are outnumbered by Syrians at the moment. The army (higher transportation cost), the security department (background checks of certain refugees), and civil defense (more fires, 300 patients per day) are overstretched. **Solid waste** in the city has gone up by 100 tonnes per day, and this while there are only 2 compressors. Before the influx of refugees, trucks transported 80 tonnes per day, this has gone up to 185 tonnes. Our general impression is that the streets of Mafraq are full of litter.

According to Ehsaad, there is an imminent danger of underground wells in the greater Mafraq region getting contaminated due to the fact that there is no proper sewerage treatment at Al Za'atari (leakage). The availability of **drinking water**, which is a problem as it is in Jordan, may soon become a huge problem. Treating the waste and sewerage of Al Za' Atari may have to be done at 400 kilometres away from the site (or at least somewhere away from the site).

A general complaint of Mr. Ehsaad is that there are many visiting delegations from abroad, but that very few of the promises of these delegations are materialized. Moreover, there is too little attention for the (Jordanian) host community, which has been heavily tested over the last two years. Housing prices have gone up, **school classes** have gone from an average of 30 to more than 50 pupils, poverty among Jordanians is on the increase.

Needs expressed at the municipal level:

- solid waste management fleet: compressors and trucks for Mafraq city;
- the availability of drinking water has become seriously problematic, (municipal) technical know-how is needed;
- more WASH facilities are needed inside municipalities;
- more school buildings are needed;
- more attention for (Jordanian) host community (in the form of 'support the supporters' program?).

In Turra (23rd, 16:00), we talked to the head of municipality and representatives of the Syrian community. Turra alone, which is situated on the border with Syria, houses some 10.000 Syrians in addition to its own population of 50.000. With three other villages, Turra forms the municipality of Sahel Touran. The war in Syria has visibly touched the area. The number of refugees is still growing rapidly. Most families have relatives in the area. Electricity expenses have gone up quickly, the cost of garbage collection has shot up, there is a general increase in housing rates. Jordanian and Egyptian labour is being pushed out since Syrians are prepared to work for much less. Syrian students have trouble following the Jordanian curriculum. There's tremendous pressure on the health sector. Everyone is afraid of environmental pollution (and ensuing health problems), particularly in the summer.

The Syrians present share the following problems with us: unemployment, (lack of) education and training, high rates for apartments (fear of eviction). Registration with UNHCR in Amman is costly and takes a lot of time. An angry man wants to leave our meeting, but he stays and shares his frustrations with us. Too few countries have stood up against Assad. Jordan needs support for hosting Syrians. Help Syrians organize conferences. The revolution is about freedom and dignity, not about financial aid, he says.

The Turra financial manager provides some more specific information. The annual budget of Turra is 1.200.000 Jordanian Dinar. 800.000 JD is received from the government. 60% of the budget goes to the 100 civil servants. 80.000 JD goes to the petrol bill of the garbage trucks. The government has a hard time making the financial transfer. At the same time, the municipality is burdened to a greater extent as weeks pass. The municipality feels left alone by 'its own' ministry of municipal affairs.

Needs expressed at the municipal level

- trucks to collect solid waste (more than the 5 in operation now);
- garbage bins;
- water tanks to help avoid water shortage;
- cash assistance / budget support for municipalities (we receive no clear answer to our question whether municipalities are allowed to directly receive cash donations from abroad;
- why not set up UNHCR registration units closer to the border / closer to concentrations of refugees?;
- more / better psychological support programs at the community level
- support in designing better communication strategy to reach out to / involve Syrian refugees.

On **Sunday the 24th**, we talk to the deputy governor of Irbid, the head of Irbid municipality, and a number of departmental directors (waste, water, education) of the governorate. The population of Irbid governorate is 1.250.000. The **deputy governor** tells us that all villages in the governorate have been affected by the influx of Syrians. There are great pressures on infrastructure (traffic congestion!), healthcare, education, and food prices. Rents (for a 6 person studio) have gone up from 250 JD to 400 JD. In some cases, Jordanian students are being 'pushed out' by more affluent Syrians who are willing and able to pay higher rates.

Municipal services are strained. A very serious problem is that the groundwater level has gone down as the number of Syrians has gone up. Without action, there will be a big water crisis this summer.

The **director of Irbid municipality** explains that greater Irbid municipality is made up of 23 villages. The annual budget of Irbid municipality is 29 million JD. The population is 600.000. 30% of this population is Syrian. Most of these Syrians come from rural areas and lack education. The daily tonnage of solid waste used to be 400 and has risen to 550. Expectations are that this will go to 700. Just this increase puts an enormous strain on the municipality, on machinery, on staff and on budget. Getting rid of one tonne of solid waste costs 35 JD.

The social behaviour of (the majority of) Syrians is different that of the host community. This has an impact on the host community. Moreover, reaching the Syrians in Irbid is difficult, since they are randomly distributed.

Municipalities are under pressure. All municipalities are faced with accumulated debt. Fuel prices have gone up. Again, many (international) delegations have passed, with little effect. Non-governmental organizations help refugees, but unfortunately, they seem to be blind for the needs of municipalities.

The municipality of Irbid has partnerships with Gaziantep (Turkey) and Viborg (Denmark). A delegation from Viborg will visit Irbid early April to assist in the field of waste management and capacity building.

According to the **director of health** of the governorate, the influx of Syrians into Irbid has led to all kinds of negative effects. The 8 hospitals and 130 medical centres of the governorate have an occupation rate of 100%. One day, 35 critical cases (chest and head wounds) were treated in Ramtha hospital. Border hospitals have taken in many wounded Syrians. Many of the 'ordinary' treatments of Jordanians are being postponed or cancelled altogether. Vaccination campaigns for children have been carried out. There constant fear of outbreaks of diarrhea and hepatitis.

The **director of water** tells us that Idlib is 100% reliant on underground water. The water is taken from depths of between 200 and 550 meters. Drilling pipes to these depths is possible. Where the aim was to pump up 80 litres in 2013, no more than 60 litres p.p. is reached at the moment. Solutions are to dig new wells and / or to improve existing wells. Another idea is that the government leases privately owned wells. In any case, waste water needs to be treated so that wells don't get contaminated.

Finally, the **director of education** of Idlib governorate explains that there are 600 schools in the governorate for 300.000 Jordanian students. 12.000 students from Syria have now been added. 5 new schools for Syrian children have been opened. The Syrian children are exempted from paying school fees. There's a lack of computers in the schools and there's a great pressure on toilet facilities. Unfortunately, visiting delegations so far have only left behind some stationary for schools.

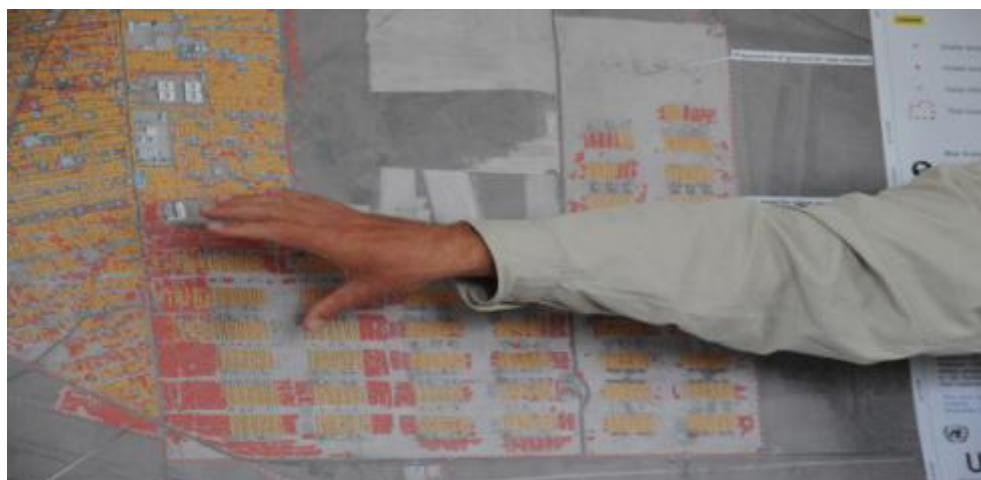
Needs expressed at the municipal level

- garbage trucks are needed (note: consult our colleagues from Viborg and Gaziantep)
- support in the field of waste management (already provided to an extent by Viborg municipality)
- New wells need to be drilled to maintain the necessary water supply. Mr. Turunc from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality makes it know that Istanbul can help out here.
- Computers and toilet facilities for schools

Quote by Ghazi al Kofahi, director of Irbid municipality: "Preparing your house for the arrival of a baby is difficult enough. Now imagine preparing your house for the arrival of thousands of Syrians".

3.4 Camp refugees

The Al Za'atari camp holds over 100.000 people when we pay our visit. The camp is run by UNHCR in cooperation with the government of Jordan. Most refugees are from the Dehraa region of Syria, just north of the border with Jordan. It is in Dehraa that the internal struggle started in Syria. Inside a tent, we speak with a number of local leaders. Committees have been set up in the camp. These committees frequently meet with NGO's. There is a simple communication system. Moreover, many people carry mobile phones.



UNCHR Al Za'atari Camp leader Kleinschmidt explains the situation

According to the leaders, the largest needs / most pressing issues in the camp are:

- Water (there are shortages!);
- Health concerns related to waste (and sanitation) problem;
- Sanitation facilities (design of toilets not ok) (please consult the refugees about this is what the leaders let us know);
- Medical services: lack of medicines in general, lack of insulin in particular;
- (camp) hospitals help (only) until 1 in the afternoon, long queues;
- No central points for delivery of services;
- Lack of camp coordination;
- Don't just think of us, help out our families inside Syria!;
- International helped Libyans to get rid of Khadaffi, help us to oust Assad (start with imposing a 'no-fly zone');
- Leaders collectively: there is perspective for peaceful coexistence between people of different religions, tribes and political affiliations in Syria after the fall of Assad.

General observations:

- The camp is extremely crowded
- camp is very dusty, electrical wires everywhere, small sewerage / waste water furrows all over the place
- many female headed households
- many children
- theft on the rise, gangs are active: camp policed by Jordanian police, with some training support of Canadian government.

Meeting with Kilian Kleinschmidt, UNCHR Senior Field Coordinator ('camp manager) at Al Za' Atari.

By the end of July of this year, all refugees should be out of tents and in a 'caravan'. These are mostly donated by the Gulf States (3.500 US Dollar per unit). From now on, 1000 units per week are being installed.

The camp is a city, according to Kleinschmidt, with many of the challenges of (running) a city. For example, vendors have become active in the camp in streets which are looking more and more like shopping streets. How to regulate this business? Some vendors are (illegally) tapping energy and earn thousands of dollars per month with their trade (for example, the 'grilled chicken vendor'). According to Kleinschmidt, the future of running camps like these is to take a local governance perspective from the very start. This requires local governance expertise.

Kleinschmidt: *"I don't need your money. Come over and help me build the capacity of the camp management. Help me run a better camp".*

Kleinschmidt has a clear vision of:

- a sustainable water system;
- proper waste management system;
- fee collection system for vendors;
- The camp is organized in modules (blocs). There are many different committees in the camp. Kleinschmidt unfolds the idea of setting up (elected) councils per module. This would have to be backed up with a proper administration and linked with service provision;
- civil registration (so that there's good info on which to plan);
- increased sense of camp ownership among refugees;
- better participation of women in the way decisions are taken;
- shifting from NGO supply driven model to refugee demand driven model. This 'shift of ownership' can be achieved by setting up a cash assistance program. Service based on choice, that's the idea;
- overall camp sustainability. Kleinschmidt: "Sometimes, outside (financial) support just gets cut. We quickly need to find ways to make the camp more resilient of itself. In this respect, it helps to take a local governance perspective".

Expressed needs:

- Local governance expertise to be made available to the UNHCR camp management. E.g. 2 or 3 local government experts on issues such as local planning, zoning, licensing, setting up / maintaining civil registration and cadaster, public participation, but even WASH related issues.
- In order to prepare for the (temporary) stationing of these local government experts, a more thorough needs assessment needs to be carried out as soon as possible. The UNHCR camp management is happy and ready to receive the incoming local government specialists.
- Since Al Za'atari has reached capacity, a new camp 'Azraq camp' for 130,000 people will be opened in June. Azraq will have a scale up to 50,000 people estimated in 40 days and full capacity within 3 months assuming all goes smoothly. This will be an even drier and more windswept location than Za'atari. Like in Al Za'atari, the local governance focus will also be required there.

Initially the (Mafraq) governorate coordinated the work of UNHCR, Jordanian security forces and others in relation to the camps (mostly Al Za'Atari). Now that the number of camps will be growing, the camp management responsibilities have been taken over by the 'Camp Affairs Directorate' of the Ministry of the Interior. The governorate will focus on needs and services outside the camps.

If one enters Jordan with a valid Syrian passport, one is free to go where one wants. If one has no passport, one is taken to Al Za'Atari where registration takes place. One can leave the camp if one is sponsored by a Jordanian host family.

4 Report of visit to Lebanon

4.1 Introduction

The Republic of Lebanon (population 4,259,405⁴) has remained open to the arrival of Syrian refugees since the beginning of the crisis, opting at the same time for a “no camp” policy. According the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 394,127⁵ Syrians went in Lebanon to flee the conflict. The Government of Lebanon estimates that 1,000,000 Syrian refugees are currently in Lebanon.

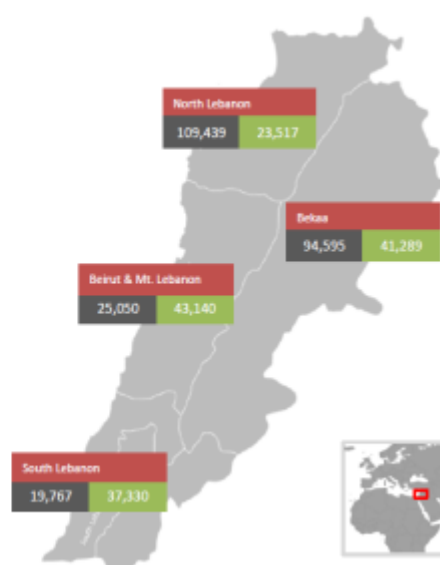
Syrian refugees are located mainly in the governorate of North Lebanon (109,439 registered and 23,517 awaiting registration) and of the governorate of Bekaa (94,595 and 41,289). In Beirut and Mont Lebanon 25,050 Syrian refugees have been registered (43,140 awaiting) and in Nabatiye and South Lebanon UNHCR registered 19,767 refugees (37,330 awaiting).

Daily Statistics

Registered on 27 Mar 2013	
Beirut & Mt Leb	620
North	956
Bekaa	818
South	234
Total	2,628

394,127	Total
248,851	Registered
145,276	Awaiting

Governorate		Registered	Awaiting	Average waiting days	Total
Beirut & Mt Lebanon	Persons ↑	25,050	43,140	41 days	68,190
	Households ↑↑	6,154	9,708		
North	Persons ↑	109,439	23,517	27 days	132,956
	Households ↑↑	25,439	4,816		
Bekaa	Persons ↑	94,595	41,289	41 days	135,884
	Households ↑↑	19,843	8,192		
South	Persons ↑	19,767	37,330	88 days	57,097
	Households ↑↑	4,204	7,466		
Total Lebanon	Persons ↑	248,851	145,276	53 days	394,127
	Households ↑↑	55,640	30,182		



Credit UNHCR⁶

⁴ In 2011. Data from the website of the World Bank:
<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx>

⁵ UNHCR Daily Statistic for Lebanon (27/03/2013). See Latest documents on UNHCR website:
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>

⁶ *Idem*.

In its Regional Response Plan for Lebanon UNHCR stated that “the Government of Lebanon (GOL) has maintained a positive humanitarian posture toward refugees and has facilitated their legal stay by permitting them to renew their residency (coupons) in the country. The Ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Interior, the High Relief Commission (HCR) and various security branches of the Governments, have been both receptive and active in partnering with humanitarian agencies- to facilitate assistance to refugees and affected communities.

This work is now being enhanced with the formation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Prime Minister’s leadership and the coordination of the Minister of Social Affairs (MoSA)⁷.

Officials stated that Lebanon will not close its borders even if they estimate that, in case of majeure event in Syria, 1 million Syrian could flee to Lebanon in one night. Despite this positive humanitarian posture the Government of Lebanon do not allow the establishment of refugees’ camps and refugees are now spread all around the 6 governorates of Lebanon in 980 localities.

In its Regional Response Plan for Lebanon UNHCR estimated the requested fund to supply aid to Syrian refugees to 267,087,536 \$ for the period January to June 2013. These estimations were made using the number of 350,000 refugees at the end of June whereas their number reached almost 400,000 at the end of March 2013.

4.2 Mission Activities

The delegation was comprised of members from the UCLG Middle East and West Asia (MEWA) Section, a Mayor from the Netherlands, technical specialists from, the Netherlands, the Union of Municipalities of Turkey, Cités Unies France and from the department of Territoire de Belfort (France).

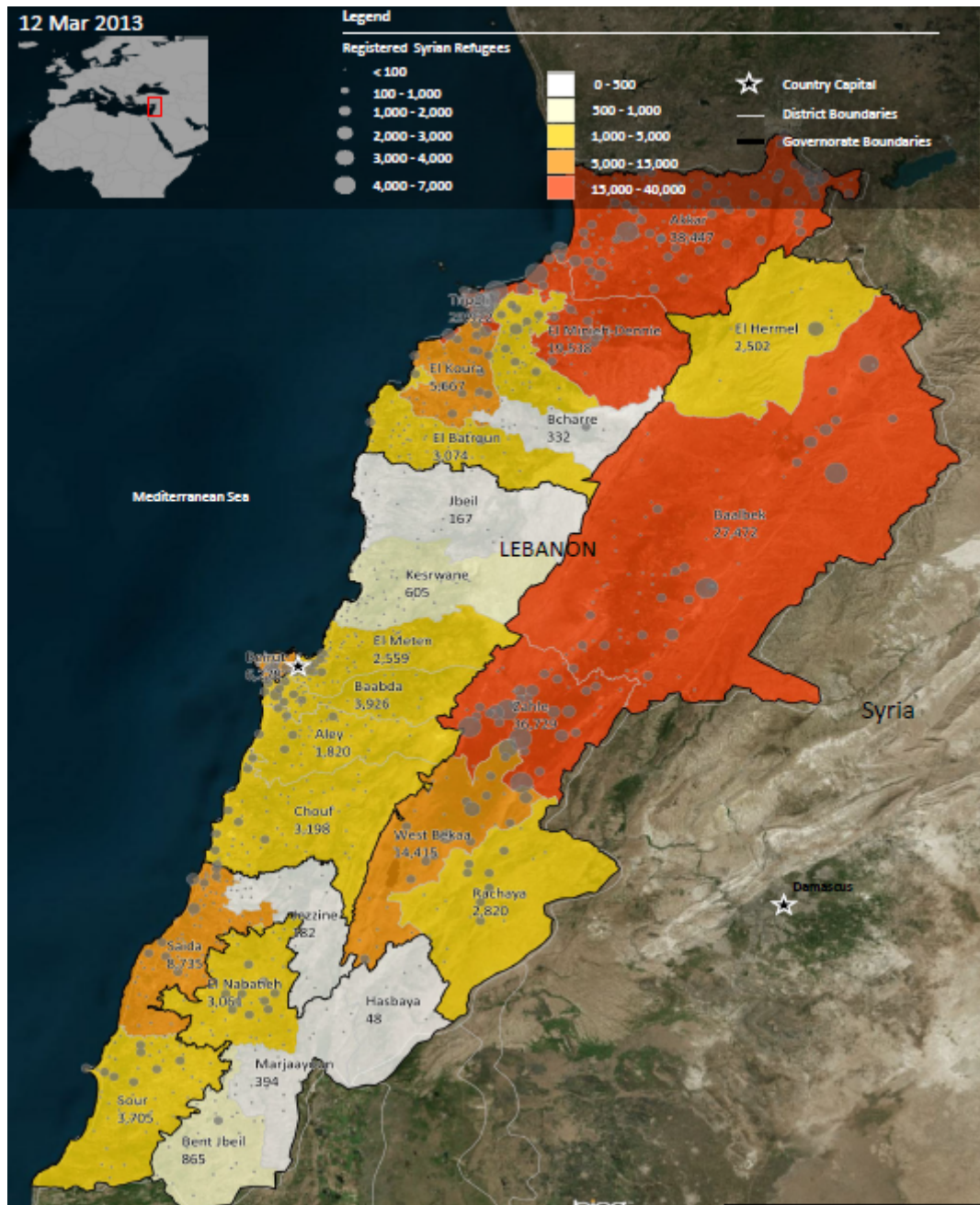
As the program of our visits in Lebanon was made in partnership with Caritas and Kab Elias Municipality, an initial meeting in Caritas office of Taalabaya was held with Deputy Mayor of Kab Elias and members of municipal staff and of Caritas staff. Caritas is a global confederation of 165 catholic organizations working in humanitarian emergencies and international development. In 1972, the Jesuit Brother Elie Maamari founded Caritas South Lebanon in cooperation with this region's bishops. It became Caritas Lebanon on September 9th, 1976. In 1981, the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops of Lebanon approved Caritas Lebanon's status. With 3 social workers and few volunteers, Caritas office in Taalabaya registered 3000 refugees and provides support to 50 families through standard kits. Their budget is funded on a voluntary basis within the framework of a call for funding to face the Syrian crisis and they deliver the aid directly to refugees. The cooperation between Caritas and Municipalities is limited to collaboration for the registration process.

⁷ UNHCR, Syria Regional Response Plan January to June 2013, p. 46.
On UNHCR website: <http://www.unhcr.org/50d192fd9.html>

Briefings and discussions took place with mayors and representatives of municipal council in Taalabaya, Saadnayel, Zahlé and Kab Elias (for the situation report of Kab Elias, drafted by the municipality itself, see Annex 5). During these meetings the delegation observed municipalities have different approaches facing the coming of Syrian refugees. Officials from Kab Elias Municipalities stated that these approaches are related to the political their affiliation.

Our program included also visits of several places hosting refugees in the Bekaa. The size of these shelters varies from few families to 1000 persons. An old school of in Taalabaya is currently hosting 9 families who fled Syria after men of their town have been made prisoners. Caritas provide them some material support through a package they deliver once a month. Another place in Kab Elias hosts 50 families in tents and other precarious shelters.





UNHCR Lebanon - Syrian Refugees Registered in Lebanon

Credits UNHCR⁸

⁸ For more information, visit <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees>

4.3 Summary Findings

Lebanon, officially the Republic of Lebanon, is a small, mountainous country located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered by Syria to the north and east, and Israel to the south. Lebanon's location at the crossroads of the Mediterranean Basin and the Arabian hinterland has dictated its rich history, and shaped a cultural identity of religious and ethnic diversity⁹.

Lebanon is spread over an area of 10,452 sq km, with a current population of 4,259,405¹⁰. The capital and largest city of the country is Beirut. Lebanon is ranked amongst the upper middle income group countries in the 2009 Arab Human Development Report of UNDP¹¹.

Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic governed by the Constitution of 23 May 1926. Since its independence in 1943, Lebanon has adopted a confessional regime, based on the distribution of the political power proportionately amongst the religious communities.

In line with its Constitution, the political system in Lebanon is established on the principle of separation, balance, and cooperation amongst the various branches of Government. Legislative power is vested in a single body, the Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies is composed of elected members, with the distribution of seats made according to the principles of the equal representation between Christians and Muslims, proportional representation among the confessional groups within each religious community, and proportional representation among geographic regions. The President of the Republic, who is the head of the state, is elected by the Chamber of Deputies. Executive power is entrusted to the Council of Ministers. The Prime Minister is the Head of Government. Judicial power is independent, and exercised by the tribunals of various levels and jurisdictions.

Lebanon has been affected by several national and regional crises throughout its history. Since 1948 the country has been hosting Palestinian refugees, according to UNRWA their current number reach 436,154¹² and half of them lives in 12 camps managed by UNRWA. Many cases of tensions occurred between the Palestinian refugees and the hosting community.

Refugees fleeing Syria to Lebanon arrived in a difficult context in which the hosting community has bad experiences with refugees. Furthermore the Syrian regime developed strong relations with the Lebanese politic world and population and the conflict in Syria affects also some part of Lebanon (particularly in Tripoli area).

As mentioned the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), in collaboration with UNHCR is in charge of the coordination of Response Plan for Lebanon. UNHCR delivers aid to registered refugees through UN agencies and NGO offices.

⁹ UCLG-MEWA, *Research on Local Government Systems in MEWA Countries*, to be published in October 2013.

¹⁰ In 2011. Data from the website of the World Bank:
<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx>

¹¹ UNDP Arab Human Development Report (2009)

¹² Figure of the 1st January 2012 on: <http://www.unrwa.org/>

Registration takes place in 3 different UNHCR Offices, NGOs centers and municipalities. Registration in NGOs or municipalities does not open the right to access UNHCR aid, NGOs and municipalities distribute their own aid. All actors met emphasized on the fact that, refugees are reluctant to register both in UNHCR and NGOs centers because they fear repression. In this context registration are made without photos and as in many cases refugees fled Syria without identity papers, it appears very difficult to identify receivers of aid. It was mentioned some refugees receive aid from all different centers whereas other stay without resources.

Officials stated more than 1 million Syrians fled to Lebanon spread in 980 localities. Officials from Municipalities are seeking help for technical, material and financial support. Technical support includes management of basics services and partnerships for a better collaboration with NGOs and UN agencies. Material support includes ambulances, garbage collection trucks, garbage containers, water pump and materiel for electricity production. Concerning the financial support, Officials from the central government emphasized on the fact that promises of grant have not been completed yet (only 32% of the 1,6 billion USD). At the local level, municipalities face problems in managing their daily administration since the government has not transferred their fiscal revenues for 3 years.

We already mentioned that collaboration between NGOs and municipalities is limited to registration of refugees and even in this regard it seems improvements could be done. Because of the extremely difficult situation a lot of NGOs are acting in Lebanon to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees. They assist them through the delivery of kits (for health, food, hygiene), through training to prevent illnesses or direct medical assistance (mentally and physically).



Small settlement of Syrian refugees in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon

The Syria-Lebanon Border: The Government of Lebanon maintains its borders open and official stated they will stay open even in case of major event in Syria. During the 2 days the delegation stayed in Lebanon 20,000 Syrians arrived in Lebanon.

Syrian workers are used to come in Lebanon for seasonal works or trade and many Syrian has family ties with Lebanese. UNHCR emphasized on the fact that most of the refugees arriving in Lebanon have already been displaced in Syria before which let them exhausted and particularly without resources.

Urban Refugees: In Lebanon weaknesses of information appear as the first problem to estimate the number of refugees in urban area. There is no systematic registration and we already mentioned the lack of coordination between municipalities, NOGs and UN agencies.

Their registration on a voluntary basis is the only way to get information about the refugees but it was mentioned that decision to register is most of the time motivated by the necessity to receive assistance and cases of multi-registration were mentioned. In this context numbers of urban refugees should be taken with a particular prudence.

The situation of urban refugees varies according several factors including their location in Lebanon, their economical situation and the size of the city or town in which they are living. In the North of Lebanon refugees have been well received by the local community even if attitudes among people differ¹³.

Legal Constraints: The Lebanese authorities do not recognize Syrian refugees as such; they consider them as displaced people and they have the HCR to provide them with assistance in the areas of health and education.

The refugees have their own status, which rests on the international law of refugees and, in particular on the Geneva Convention of 1951 relative to refugee statute. Contrarily to the latter, the displaced people do not benefit from any specific legal regime even though they benefit from certain clauses of international humanitarian law¹⁴.

Protection and Security: There have been some serious troubles in some areas of Tripoli since the beginning of the crisis. Denominational conflicts have broken out in Tripoli with several deaths as a result. These conflicts highlight the profound division between the Lebanese political parties with regard to the Syrian crisis¹⁵.

In others part of the country, officials report there have been no major conflicts between community and refugees. Despite the situation seems “under control”, as quoted the Mayor of Zahle, local population started to be deeply irritated by the presence of Syrian refugees.

¹³ NAUFAL Hala, *Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions*, MPC RR 2012/13, Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, 2012, p.9.

¹⁴ NAUFAL Hala, *Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Humanitarian Approach under Political Divisions*, opus cit., p.10. For your information Lebanon is not a part of the Convention of Geneva.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.11.

Pressures on Local Economies: “The host communities’ economic resources situation is difficult and the refugees constitute a heavy burden. The regions of Akkar, Hermel and the majority of northern and western Bekaa, where most of the refugees are concentrated, are deprived in every respect particularly though their economic conditions: low income, high unemployment, especially seasonal workers, weak physical, health and education infrastructure”¹⁶.

In this context local population started to be very critical on the Syrian presence. In many cases Lebanese citizens mentioned the fact that Syrians often take the work of Lebanese as a source of tension between the two communities.

In addition Lebanese trade which transits through Syrian roads has been affected by the conflict and a strong regression of activities in sector of tourism (9,4% of the GDP) started with the Libyan crisis in seems to continue since the Syrian crisis lasts¹⁷.

Local Government Services and Needs: As a consequence of all context information presented in this report Local Government services have been deeply affected by the presence of Syrian refugees. The Mayor of Saadnayel stated that the town whose population is 15,000 inhabitants hosts 18,000 refugees. In terms of garbage collection this situation represents an extra-cost of 5000\$ per month for the municipality.

In Kab Elias where Syrian refugees represent two thirds of the population, the municipality tries to make some efforts to help the refugees but their budget is very limited. During the meeting we have, the Mayor of Kab Elias presented clearly the needs of the municipality (Annex 5: Situation Report on Displaced Syrians in Kab Elias). First of all he mentioned health problems including epidemics and lice. Second: the water supply network does not include areas where the refugees are located which creates a lot of problems both for refugees and the host community. Third: waste collection, the municipality does not have the necessary material to collect the waste in all area hosting refugees. Forth: illegal connections on the electrical network induce frequent power cuts and it became necessary to develop the capacity of production of electricity of the municipality. Finally in terms of security, the municipality already increased the number of policemen (from 4 to 14) in the town but support could be requested if refugees continue to arrive massively.

The meeting the delegation had in Zahle Municipality offered the opportunity to observe the various point of view of the different municipalities. The Mayor of Zahle stated that the relations between the host communities and the refugees were very low and, except few cases of robbery, the situation is quasi normal in Zahle Municipality.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.17.

¹⁷ In 2011 Lebanon knew of regression of 25% in tourism after a year 2010 particularly fructuous (+20%). In 2012 the regression lasts with a loss of 16%. (Sources: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/pays-zones-geo/liban/presentation-du-liban/>; Newspaper L’Orient le Jour, <http://www.lorientlejour.com/category/%C3%89conomie/article/793044/Le-secteur-touristique-libanais%2C-grande-victime-economique-de-2012.html>, Mouvement pour le Liban: <http://mplbelgique.wordpress.com/2010/12/29/le-tourisme-au-liban-bat-les-records-en-2010-2-2-millions-de-touristes-et-plus-de-8-milliards-de-dollars-de-revenus/>

5 Recommendations

The displaced Syrian people situation has put host municipalities and towns and cities adjacent to camps in the three countries under considerable strain, particularly in Lebanon and Jordan. In some cases, the displaced population has doubled the size of the community and the impact has been felt on all basic services, in particular, water, sanitation, waste disposal, healthcare and education. However important, the work of the United Nations and non-government agencies cannot and should not replace local government authority responsibilities. Specific and targeted support to local governments is critical if social stability is to be maintained. Some of this support can best be offered by partners from the world of local government.

It is therefore recommended that UCLG and the international local government community show solidarity with, and provide urgent support to the affected local governments in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon and Syria by:

- Making every effort to bring the gravity of the humanitarian situation to the attention of world leaders (the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the European Union, national and local governments, the non-government community and also the private sector) and advocate for an end to the conflict.
- Calling on members to redirect resources to assist affected local authorities and host communities with their needs through decentralized cooperation / MIC including:
 - Financial / budget support
 - Technical support: managing and delivering basic services such as water and sanitation, waste management, education and health care; creating communications and outreach strategies; and partnership development and coordination
 - Material support: provision of water pumps, ambulances, fire trucks, garbage trucks and containers, transport vehicles, electricity production materials.
- Specifically, calling on the membership of UCLG to contribute financially to a Local Authorities Emergency Support Fund which is to be managed by a consortium of VNG International, FCM, CUF¹⁸, UCLG-MEWA and Union of Municipalities of Turkey and which will serve to finance concrete projects (based on the needs described above) to improve the conditions of the inhabitants of local authorities which have been affected by the conflict.
- Prioritising support for Lebanon and Jordan, more specifically, Kab Elias and surrounding municipalities (Bekaa Valley, Lebanon) and the Al Za'Atari and Azraq camps (Mafraq, Jordan) and supporting calls for financial support to these programs which the collaborating organisations will make to third parties, notably to governments and multilateral institutions.

¹⁸ VNG International, FCM and CUF took part in the mission and also work together in a joint programme for the reconstruction of municipalities in Haiti

- Supporting the Union of Municipalities of Turkey to further build their capacity to support member municipalities affected by natural and man-made disasters (10 since 2004).
- Promoting more cooperation between Lebanese Authorities and UN agencies and NGO.
- Maintaining / establishing contact with Syrian municipalities who will need help with reconstruction and, in the longer term, with developing a democratic local government system.

At the same time, with a view to faster and better coordination of future support to disaster torn local government, it is recommended that UCLG

- Continues to encourage its members to collaborate on developing and funding local government oriented post disaster relief and reconstruction programs.
- Calls for the establishment of a (UCLG) “Rapid Response Protocol” to improve and guide support to local governments affected by future natural and man-made disasters ensuring support and input from all regional section of UCLG, and,
- Mandate the Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy Committee and its working groups to investigate the feasibility of a Local Government Disaster Preparedness and Response Centre, striving to help local government to minimize the consequences of disaster and to optimize the conditions for post disaster response and recovery, and to report back to the Executive Bureau specifying the feasibility and mandate.

ANNEX I: LETTERS OF PRESIDENT TOPBAS



United Cities
and Local
Governments

The President

Istanbul, 13 August 2012

Cités et
Gouvernements
Locaux Unis

Ciudades
y Gobiernos
Locales Unidos

Subject: UCLG calls for peace and solidarity in Syria

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

As Mayor of Istanbul and as President of UCLG, I am writing to you in view of the tragic spiral of violence that continues in Syria.

I would like to express the solidarity of the local authorities around the world with the local authorities in Syria. Our thoughts are in particular with the citizens of Damascus and Aleppo, longstanding member of our Organization. We would like to call for a halt of violence and protection of civilian lives as we are convinced more bloodshed is not the answer.

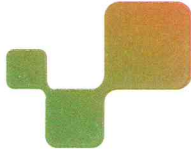
We encourage the international community to provide humanitarian aid and to deploy all necessary diplomatic means to lead to a solution. We also call local authorities around the world to collaborate within their own possibilities.

We all look forward for peace and dialogue to be restored soon in Syria and to working hand in hand towards a peaceful society meeting the aspirations of its people.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Kadir TOPBAŞ
Mayor of Istanbul
President of UCLG



United Cities
and Local
Governments

Cités et
Gouvernements
Locaux Unis

Ciudades
y Gobiernos
Locales Unidos

Istanbul, 20 February 2013

President of UCLG

Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi
UN – Arab League Special Envoy
for Syria

Subject: UCLG Mission to Syrian border municipalities in Turkey, in Jordan and in Lebanon, **18-26 March 2013.**

Dear Mr. Brahimi,

I am writing to inform you about the mission to Syrian border municipalities in Jordan, in Lebanon and in my own country Turkey that will soon be carried out under my leadership as President of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Syria may well be the worst human catastrophe in the world at this moment. Vast numbers of people are displaced inside Syria, and according to the latest reports, more than 700.000 people have sought refuge in bordering countries.

Border municipalities in Jordan, Lebanon and my own country Turkey have to cope with all the problems associated with the rapidly growing numbers of refugees. The stress on the institutional capacity and the service provision capacity of the affected municipalities is enormous. No one can predict how long the situation will last.

In response to the plights from the municipalities which have been put to me by both the Middle East and West Asia Section of our World Organization, UCLG-MEWA, and our Committee on Decentralized Cooperation and City Diplomacy as well as its Working Group on the Middle East, I have called for the above mentioned mission. The mission, which will take place between 18 and 26 March has two objectives. On the one hand, the world community of local governments wants to express its solidarity with the municipalities who are hosting the vast numbers of Syrian refugees. On the other hand we seek to strengthen our information position with respect to the specific needs of the border municipalities. We will be guided by the following main questions: how are the municipalities (their apparatuses) affected, how can they best cope with the situation, what can best be done to support them. The mission will be carried out by a team of elected local government officials and experienced technical experts from national associations of local governments and related organizations in Canada, France, The Netherlands, Spain and Turkey.


As soon as the findings of the mission team are available, I will share them with my membership. Depending on the outcome of the mission, I will consider launching a global fund raising initiative for affected municipalities.

I will keep you informed about the findings of our mission and about all relevant follow-up initiatives.

In the meantime, please feel free to inform others about our initiative. We welcome any input which can enhance the execution of our mission and our possible future initiatives in support of the border municipalities of Syria.

On behalf of the global community of local governments,

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Kadir Topbaş
Mayor of Istanbul
President of UCLG

Carrer Avinyó, 15
08002 Barcelona
Espanya
Tel +34 93 34 28 750
Fax +34 93 34 28 760
info@cities-localgovernments.org
www.cities-localgovernments.org

ANNEX II: ORIGINAL MISSION PROGRAM

Tentative Program

**UCLG
Middle East Working Group**

Peace mission in Syria
in the neighboring countries of Syria
Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey
18th to 26th of March 2013

DAYS	MOORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Monday 18 th	<p>A Turkey Istanbul</p> <p>Departure from Paris, France 10h10 Arriving in Istanbul at 14h30 (Air France)</p>	<p>Turkey Istanbul</p> <p>18:00-19:00: Meeting with Dr. Kadir TOPBAŞ, Mayor of Istanbul and President of UCLG</p>	<p>Turkey Istanbul</p> <p>Kalyon Hotel Sahilyolu, Sultanahmet Istanbul</p>
Tuesday 19 th	<p>Turkey Istanbul-Gaziantep</p> <p>05:00 :Leaving Kalyon Hotel for Istanbul Atatürk Airport</p> <p>06:20-08:00 Flight to Gaziantep by Turkish Airlines (TK2220)</p> <p>10:00-11:00 : Visit to Dr. Asım GÜZELBEY, Mayor of Gaziantep Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality</p> <p>12:00-13:30: Lunch</p>	<p>Turkey Gaziantep</p> <p>14:00-15:00: Visit to Mr. Erdal ATA, Governor of Gaziantep</p> <p>16:00-17:00 : Visit to Mr. Veysel DALMAZ, Coordinator Governor for Syrian Refugees</p>	<p>Turkey Gaziantep</p> <p>Grand Hotel Gaziantep</p>

Wednesday 20 th	<p>Turkey Gaziantep</p> <p>09:00-10:00: Visit to UNHCR Office (to be confirmed)</p> <p>10:00-11:00: Visit to the Office of the Turkish Red Crescent Country Area Coordination for Syria Crisis</p> <p>11:30: Transfer to Islahiye (105 km)</p> <p>12:30-13:30: Lunch</p>	<p>Turkey Islahiye</p> <p>13:30-14:00: Visit to Mr. Osman BEYAZYILDIZ, Sub-Governor of Islahiye Hükümet Konağı, Islahiye / Gazintep</p> <p>14:00-14:30: Visit to Mrs. Malike ULUDAĞ, Mayor of Islahiye, Islahiye Belediye Başkanlığı, Gaziantep</p> <p>15:30-16:30: Visit to the Islahiye Refugee Camp</p> <p>17:00: Transfer to Antakya (110 km)</p> <p>19:00: Arrival in Antakya</p>	<p>Turkey Antakya</p> <p>Anemon Hotel</p>
Thursday 21 st	<p>Turkey Hatay (Antakya)</p> <p>09:00-10:00: Visit to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lütfü SAVAŞ, Mayor of Antakya, Antakya Belediye Başkanlığı, Antakya</p> <p>10:30-11:30: Visit to Mr. Mehmet Celalettin LEKESİZ, Governor of Hatay, Hatay Valiliği, Antakya</p> <p>12:00-13:30: Lunch</p>	<p>Turkey Hatay (Antakya)</p> <p>14:00-14:30: Visit to Mr. Ali ARSLANTAŞ, Sub-Governor of Altınözü Yenişehir Mahallesi Atatürk Caddesi Hükümet Konağı, Altınözü / Hatay</p> <p>14:30-15:00: Visit to Mr. Cavit ALKAN, Mayor of Altınözü</p> <p>15:30-17:00: Visit to Altınözü Refugee Camp</p>	<p>Turkey Istanbul</p> <p>Kalyon Hotel Sahilyolu, Sultanahmet Istanbul</p>

		21:45-23:30: Flight to Istanbul by Turkish Airlines (TK2257)	
Friday 22 nd	Turkey Istanbul 12:00: Leaving Kalyon Hotel for Istanbul Atatürk Airport 14:35-17:45: Flight to Amman by Royal Jordanian (RJ166)	Jordan Amman Diner with a member of ACTED	Jordan Amman AlQasr Metropole Hotel
Saturday 23 rd	Jordan Governorate Mafraq 8:00: Departure from Amman 9:00 to 09:30: Briefing at ACTED 09:30 to 10:00: Discussion with refugee community leaders in Za'atari camp 10:00 to 11:30 : Visit of Za'atari camp, presentation of ongoing activities 12:00 to 13:00 : Meeting with Mafraq Governor (<i>to be confirmed by Sami asap</i>)	Jordan Al Ramtha 13:00 to 15:00 : Travel to Al Ramtha, lunch break (<i>restaurant location to be confirmed by Badawi</i>) 15:00 to 17:00 : Visit to a host community village in Ramtha (<i>most likely Torra – to be confirmed asap by Ammar</i>) o Meeting with local municipal authorities o Meeting with Syrian community representatives o Visit of refugee households (if possible) 17:00 : Return to Amman	Jordan Amman AlQasr Metropole Hotel
Sunday 24 th	Jordan Meetings to be confirmed	Jordan Amman Meeting with the French embassy (to be confirmed) 21h30: Departure to Beirut (Lebanon) Arriving 21h30 (royal jordanian)	Lebanon Beyrouth Markazia Monroe Suites hotel
Monday 25 th	Lebanon Zahlé and surroundings	Lebanon Zahlé and surroundings	Liban

	(Bekaa)	(Bekaa)	
	<p>9h00 : departure from the hotel</p> <p>10h-11h30: meeting with Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center and visit to the Taabalava caritas center¹</p> <p>12h00-13h00 : meeting with the Taabalava local council</p> <p>13h00-14h30 : lunch</p>	<p>15h00-16h00 : meeting with Joseph Diab-Maalouf, Head of Zahlé local council</p> <p>16h30-17h30 : meeting with Fayad Ali Haydar, mayor of Kab Elias</p> <p>18h00-19h00 : meeting with Saadnayel local council</p> <p>back to Beirut</p>	<p>Hotel Markazia Monroe Suites</p> <p>Meeting with the French embassy at the hotel (debriefing)</p>
Tuesday 26 th	Lebanon Beyrouth	Lebanon Beyrouth	Back
	<p>10h00: Meeting with UNHCR</p> <p>Meeting with Mr Ramzi Naaman, Prime minister conselor in charge of the Syrian crisis (to be confirmed)</p> <p>Meeting with the Minister of social affaires (to be confirmed)</p>		

HOTELS

In Istanbul

Kalyon hotel

Phone : +90 212 517 44 00 Fax: +90 212 638 11 11

¹ To go to the center : take the main road of Taalabay (between Chtaura to Zahleh), turn on the right 2 streets after the « Centre Hussein » (Shop with an orange front appearance)

E-Mail : kalyon@kalyon.com
<http://www.kalyon.com/>

In Amman

AlQasr Metropole Hotel

P.O.Box 926192, Amman 11110 Jordan
Tel: ++ 962 6 5689671/2
Fax: ++ 962 6 5689673
E-mail: alqasr@alqasrmetropole.com

In Beirut

« Markazia Monroe Suites » ***** ; Beyrouth
Rue Syrie, Solidere, Beyrouth
Tel : +961 1 991 200
Fax : +961 1 991 211
www.markaziamonroesuites.com

Contacts

Phones numbers

Cenk TIKIZ (Turkey)

Portable: (+90) (0) 533 359 15 15
Bureau: (+90) (0) 212 511 10 10

Acted (Jordan)

Gaia VAN DER ESCH
Project Development Manager
+962 (0) 796 01 76 82
Robin Nataf
Area Coordinator, North Jordan
+962 (0) 7 996 517 09
Rund Nazzal > *your logistics focal point*
Admin /HR Manager
+962 (0) 797 124 646
Najibullah Nabizad
Deputy country Director
+962 (0) 79 7565107
ACTED - Amman OFFICE
25 Ahmad Shawqi street- Jebel Al-weibdeh-Amman (P.O. Box 940102, Amman 11194, Jordan)
+962 (0) 646 362 75

Lebanon

M. Joseph Malouf 00961 (0)3734001

Saadnayel maire M. Khalil Aahimi 00961 (0) 71392395

Vice-maire Taalabaya M. Bashar Mohiuddin 00961 (0) 3696443

M. Ryan Qutaish pour le Haut Commissariat 00961 (0) 71733049

M. Jean-Haj Caritas 0061 (0) 3260386

Béchir 00961 3 732 390

Cecile Fradot, Senior External Relations Officer UNHCR Office, Beirut, Lebanon

Telephone: 961-1-849-201 ext. 1761

Mobile: 961-70-319-308

Hombeline Dulière, Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center

Phone : +961 76 324 965

Eric Bouvard, + 961 70 74 68 13

Participants

Simoné Giovetti : 0033 6 99156382

Samia Jaber :33 6 23753 20

Mme Joëlle Faguer 0611070837

Pauline Mouly 0675657848

ANNEX III: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

list of participants

Local government Association of local authorities	Name	Surname	Fonction	details
FRANCE				
Cités Unies France	GALLET	Bertrand	directeur général	22nd to 26th Jordan and Lebano
Cités Unies France	GIOVETTI	Simoné	chargé de mission	18th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
Conseil général du Territoire de Belfort	JABER	Samia	Vice Présidente du CG90	Lebanon
Conseil régional Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur	MOULY	Pauline	Vice director International Relations	Turkey 18th to 22th
Conseil régional Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur	FAGUER	Joelle	Déleguée auprès du 1er Vice Président pour la Solidarité Internationale	Turkey 18th to 22th
NETHERLANDS				
Municipality of Groningen	Rehwinkel	Peter	Mayor of Municipality of Groningen	Turkey 18th to 20th
Municipality of Oisterwijk	Janssen	Hans	Mayor of Municipality of Oisterwijk	Jordan 22nd to 23rd
VNG International	Breugem	Jaap	Senior Project Manager	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
Municipality of Montfoort	Jansen	Bert	Mayor of Municipality of Montfoort	Lebanon 24th to 26th
CANADA				
FCM International	Kardish	Carol	Program Director, Ukraine	17th to the 24th Turkey/Jordan
TURKEY				
MEWA	TIKIZ	Cenk	General Coordinator, UCLG-MEWA	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
MEWA	LICHA	Adrien	Projects Officer, UCLG-MEWA	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	TURUNÇ	Ismail Hakki	Advisor to Mayor on Humanitarian Aid	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	SÜRAT	Süleyman	Interpreter	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality	DIZDAR	Onur	Interpreter	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
UMT (Union of Turkish municipalities)	GUNGOR	Hayrettin	general secretar	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon
UMT (Union of Turkish municipalities)	AVCI	Bora	Expert/Interpreter	17th to 26th Turkey/Jordan/Lebanon

**ANNEX IV: SITUATION REPORT ON SYRIAN DISPLACED IN
KABELIAS**

Situation Report on Syrian Displaced in Kabelias

25\3\2013

The number of displaced Syrian families in Kabelias is more than 2200 or about 13,000 people, of whom 60% of them live in tents spread over 16 gathering in the town and 40% of them are living in households.

Tented settlements situation:

Families are living in a very bad situation: dirt ground, water entering into the tent, moisture and mold, bad WASH conditions and the spread of contagious skin disease and Lice among them.

Health status is bad, although there are some institutions that offer health services and medicines from clinics and associations, but it is not sufficient and does not fulfill the whole need.

Tented settlements residence need:

➤ **WASH Gaps:**

- Providing them with **drinking water**, as the water is being transported to them from the nearest supplying point, and here we suggest to put water tanks in each location according to the size of the gathering, as well as providing a mobile water tank with a capacity of 10,000 liters to transfer water from the town well to the gatherings.
- **Environment and waste management:** wastes and garbage are spread all around the tents, so there is a need to put waste containers, and increase the number of the garbage trucks to transfer the wastes to the dump.

- Providing with **hygiene kits and detergents** to clean the tents also treating and preventing the Syrians from different infectious skin diseases.
- Increasing the capacity of the **sanitation system**.
- These tents are without **Electricity coverage** and therefore without proper lightening, so it is very necessary to provide with a big or small generator for each gathering depending on the number of the tents.
- Create a working group between the municipality and residents to coordinate services and activities and follow-up with associations and institutions and donor agencies.

➤ Education Gaps:

When it comes to education sector, what has been done so far is the process of introducing students to schools in a non systematic and non-scientific process,

Two major problems are facing us in this sector:

1. The schools capacity where it could not accommodate all displaced students.
2. At the level of the curriculum, there is a big difference between the Lebanese curriculum and curriculum Syrian especially on the language level.

Around 1300 Syrian student was enrolled in the education system or at least following education activities in public and private schools in Kabeleas, meanwhile a big number of the students could not get any education activity. We suggest re-examine the educational status to determine the gaps we have, and one of those gaps is that the existing kindergarten and kindergarten does not exist for students Syrians. We also need to think of the coming academic year and the summer activities to compensate for the students as the winter is getting longer.

What are the challenges that face the municipality to address this problem?

- The **financial resources** available to the municipal are very scarce, especially as the government did not give municipalities their allocations since three years ago and so far, making us unable to continue providing assistance that we are covering now, especially if the crisis goes longer and the number of displaced raises and people influx increases to our town.
- The municipality in partnership with some of the associations formed a committee to follow up on displaced people and provided them with some material and assistance in the beginning of the crisis, but the **numbers quickly increasing** and this is a burden for the time being that we can't face it alone.
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with partners from associations (NGOs), which operates in this area and provide assistance on monthly regular basis for families registered with the support of the Kabelias, where as 915 families are registered so far. The problem is with 1285 families who are **unregistered and pending families** and do not receive the necessary help on regular basis, except for food kits in an irregular manner by the municipality, NGOs and CSOs in the town.