

# OPERATIONAL UPDATE ON SYRIA

ICRC responds to the fallout in Syria of escalating hostilities in Lebanon



24<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER - 20<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2024



**SINCE** the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has been closely monitoring the consequences of the deteriorating conflict situation in Lebanon. The movement of hundreds of thousands of people fleeing violence from Lebanon to Syria has generated massive humanitarian needs and has required a fast and coordinated emergency response from all concerned authorities and humanitarian actors.

As of 19<sup>th</sup> of October, it is estimated that 425.000 people (around 72% of Syrian and 28% of Lebanese) have crossed the border to continue their way to various governorates. Many are traveling by taxi, bus, or on foot. These individuals – primarily women, children, and elderly people – arrive exhausted, having endured weeks of mounting fear and uncertainty. Their future remains unclear as they seek safety in a country already burdened by over a decade of conflict. While thousands are being housed in designated shelters across Syria, the majority have been hosted in communities across Homs, Rural Damascus, Raqqa, Aleppo, Dara’a and other governorates. In a country where critical infrastructure, livelihoods, and the provision of essential services, including water,

electricity and healthcare, have been severely impacted by years of conflicts and crises, any additional strain will be extremely difficult to absorb and will require an enhanced and coordinated collective humanitarian response. In addition to assistance, protection, and safety for all displaced persons, wherever they are, will also be tantamount. The ICRC is working in partnership with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) to assess and meet the immediate needs of those crossing the border, staying in shelters or hosted in communities. Emergency response has been bolstered, allowing the ICRC and SARC to respond effectively to some of the most critical needs, such as water and hygiene, medical care, food, and protection.



## ECONOMIC SECURITY

In an effort to address food needs, 3,850 canned food parcels were distributed, benefiting around 45’000 people entering through various border crossing points in Rural Damascus, Homs, and Tartous, as well as those staying at the Herjelleh shelter.





## WATER AND HABITAT

Approximately 100,000 water bottles (1.5 litre each) were distributed at various crossing points in Rural Damascus, Homs, Tartous, Raqqa, and Deir Ezzor. At the Jdaidet Yabous border crossing point, 4 water tanks with a capacity of 5 cubic meters each were installed, along with tank bases and tap stands. Additionally, 2 latrine units, each containing 4 toilets, were set up, and 50 waste bins were provided to improve sanitation. Hygiene efforts have been bolstered with the provision of 850 liquid soap containers across the mentioned regions. Since the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, hygiene and cleaning activities, including garbage collection, have been underway in Jdaidet Yabous to ensure a healthier environment for those affected. To aid travelers, 10 trolleys have been provided to help transport luggage between Lebanon and Syria. Furthermore, 3,500 water bottles and six 5-cubic-meter water tanks, completed with bases and tap stands, were installed at the Herjelleh shelter.



## HEALTH

The ICRC Health Department provided support to the two main healthcare responders: SARC and the Ministry of Health (MoH). Coordinating closely with both entities, the ICRC monitored the healthcare response at both national and sub-national levels. To date, ICRC-supported SARC Emergency Medical Services team responded to 2,933 cases, in addition to 16,523 beneficiaries who benefited from medical services provided by ICRC-supported Mobile Health Units.

## PROTECTION OF FAMILY LINKS

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) has activated Protection of Family Links (PFL) emergency kits donated by the ICRC at various border crossings, including in Tartous, Homs, and Rural Damascus. These kits enable separated family members crossing the border to reconnect with their relatives by providing access to phone calls and internet services. Thanks to this essential service, hundreds of phone calls were made while internet connection was offered to all people in need.

Additionally, SARC teams collected 18 tracing requests from people looking for their family members and 6 family reunification requests currently processed by the ICRC Delegation in Lebanon. In some tragic instances, some people fleeing from Lebanon had no choice but to cross the border with their deceased family members. Despite tremendously challenging circumstances, the dignified transfer of 11 deceased persons could be facilitated by the SARC.

