
Quarterly Report

**DRC Lebanon,
January - March 2009**

BACKGROUND AND CONFLICT

Description of conflict

The DRC Lebanon programme currently addresses two populations affected by conflict in the region. These include an estimated 400,000 Palestinians, the majority of who fled from Palestine in 1948.

Also included are some 15,000-20,000 Iraqi refugees who have fled the ongoing sectarian violence in Iraq. Following the defeat of Iraqi military forces in the spring of 2003, an uprising began against coalition forces. The uprising was mainly supported by the previously dominating Sunni group, redundant militaries and eventually, radical Islamic insurgents. As Iraqi civilians have come increasingly under attack, however, the conflict has taken on the characteristics of sectarian-based civil war complicated by the involvement of external players, including neighbouring countries and Al Qaeda. While a full political or military solution is not expected soon, the security situation is gradually improving and some refugees are returning.

Displacement situation

Palestinian refugees: Lebanon hosts an estimated 400,000 Palestinians. Half of these live in 12 official UNRWA camps, while the rest are located in dispersed Palestinian communities called “gatherings”. Despite the efforts of UNRWA, living standards for most Palestinians are far below those of the host Lebanese communities, with overcrowding and poor quality infrastructure and services, and lack of access to quality employment opportunities. These circumstances have evolved into a cycle of diminishing opportunity and hope, resulting in increasing discontent and marginalization among Palestinians.

Among the Palestinians are 2,122 (latest figure according to DRC database) non-ID refugees, most of whom entered the country in 1970 when the PLO relocated from Amman to Beirut. UNRWA has been unable to register them in Lebanon because they do not fall within the category of 1948 refugees and their descendants; at the same time, they cannot be registered by the Lebanese authorities without verification of their true origin. As a result, they have resided in Lebanon in legal limbo, typically confined to camps and unable to

marry, work, study or travel. Due largely to advocacy by DRC and others, the Lebanese Government has very recently agreed to provide one-year renewable residence permits for most non-ID refugees. Implementation of this policy began in September 2008, but is currently suspended.

Iraqi refugees: Widespread sectarian violence in Iraq following the US-led invasion in 2003 and overthrow of Saddam Hussein has led to large-scale population displacement both within Iraq itself and to neighbouring countries. DRC estimates that between 15 and 20 thousand Iraqis currently in Lebanon require some level of assistance. Lebanon has not signed the 1951 UN convention or 1967 protocol relating to refugees, and has no domestic refugee law. The majority of Iraqis in Lebanon do not have legal permission to stay in Lebanon and therefore live in hiding with little access to social services or legal employment. If caught, they are subject to arrest and deportation as illegal migrants.

DRC'S PRESENCE

DRC history

DRC opened its mission in September 2004 and has since then produced surveys and assessments on vulnerable groups on whom information was lacking:

- Palestinian Non-ID refugees in Lebanon, March 2005 (funded by ECHO); updated September 2007;
- Profile of the Iraqi population in Lebanon, July 2005 (funded by UNHCR);
- Needs assessment on Palestinian refugees in gatherings in Lebanon, August 2005 (funded by ECHO);
- Iraqi Population Survey in Lebanon, November 2007 (funded by UNHCR).

From 2004 until mid-2006, DRC's core programme provided legal assistance, material support and advocacy for the Palestinian non-ID refugee population in Lebanon. The programme was reactivated in September 2006, after the war, and is has been co-funded by ECHO and the Lisa og Gudmund Joergensens Fond, a private Danish foundation, up until October 2008. In addition to legal aid, DRC has provided school supplies, winterisation assistance, vocational training and in-kind grants to a number of non-ID Palestinian families. We have worked with 3 local NGO partners and formed part of an advocacy network of international and national NGOs.

After the 2006 summer war, DRC refocused its primary attention to addressing the short-term, emergency needs of IDPs and returnees in areas directly affected by the conflict. In addition to managing UNHCR's central warehousing and distribution network, DRC's emergency activities included distribution of non-food items (NFI) to IDPs in West Beirut and Mount Lebanon and provision of NFI, winterisation assistance and shelter repair to returnees in two areas of south Lebanon, both funded by ECHO and Danida.

With emergency needs diminished, these activities transitioned, in early 2007, into livelihood support in the form of in-kind grants (mainly tools & equipment)

to restart businesses, vocational training and community infrastructure repair/improvements to improve local economies in three war-affected areas: South Lebanon, the Beqaa and southern Beirut (Dahieh). These activities, funded by ECHO and Danida, were completed in March 2008, respectively. Between October 2007 and April 2008, DRC also provided technical support for housing reconstruction in Southern Lebanon and the Beqaa under a UN-Habitat-funded project.

Between late 2006 and December 2007, DRC implemented a project to develop the capacities of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs' social development centres (SDCs) in war-affected areas. DRC provided equipment, furnishings and other material items to 30 SDCs, along with staff training and funds for mini-projects targeting vulnerable groups within their communities. Under the same project, DRC also funded protection-related small projects to extend the capacities and outreach of 21 local NGOs to complement SDC services and programmes.

Since mid-2008, DRC has started two new initiatives for the Palestinian refugees. The first, funded by the British government, targets marginalised youth in the city of Saida, with a focus on education and livelihood support. More recently, in March 2009, DRC received ECHO funding for a general Palestinian protection programme focusing primarily on the Saida and Tyre regions in south Lebanon.

Finally, in September 2008, DRC Lebanon initiated two projects (funded by the U.S. Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration) targeting vulnerable Iraqi refugees, with an emphasis on reaching those in the outlying, under-served areas of Lebanon.

Brief narrative description of current DRC programme

DRC currently implements several projects in support of Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. DRC coordinates closely with all relevant stakeholders and service providers, including UNRWA and UNHCR, local Lebanese and Palestinian authorities, and local and international NGOs.

I. Palestinian Refugee Programme (since 2004)

a: Palestinian Refugee Protection Project (March 2009-March 2010):

The purpose of this project is to enhance the protection environment for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon with a particular focus on communities in the south of the country (5 camps and 23 gatherings in the areas of Saida and Tyre).

Impact will be achieved by tackling protection issues at three levels. Firstly, the individual level by providing direct support to highly vulnerable refugees including non-ID refugees and families from Nahr el Bared (NBC) displaced in southern Lebanon, secondly, at the community level, through improved awareness of protection issues, referral and response capacities, and finally at the regional / national level through information dissemination, coordination and

advocacy.

The project will provide directly information and other support to an estimated 5,000 vulnerable Palestinians. Other potential beneficiaries are the estimated catchment population of 150,000 Palestinian refugees living in the camps and gathering in the project target areas.

b. Enhanced Economic and Educational Opportunities for Palestinian Refugees in Ein el Hilweh camp

Under this 3-year project, DRC and its partners seek to reduce the social and economic marginalisation of Palestinian youth by facilitating access to vocational training and job opportunities for young people, supporting start-up and existing small businesses, providing remedial education for school dropouts and those students at risk of dropping out, and advocating with community business leaders and national authorities. Proposed outputs include:

- Increased livelihood opportunities for 450 youth and 180 micro- and small-scale businesses in EHC will lead to better economic status (increased employment and better job opportunities).
- Increased educational opportunities in EHC for 500 school drop-outs, students at risk of dropping out and graduates seeking higher-level education.
- Increased awareness amongst key stakeholders of the benefits and impediments to Palestinian participation in the Lebanese economy.

II. Iraqi Refugee Programme (since 2008)

c. Civil Society Support and Community Outreach for Iraqis &

d. Non-food and Emergency Assistance for Iraqi refugees

These two complementary projects seek to increase the outreach of NGOs providing services to Iraqis throughout Lebanon, with an emphasis on under-served peripheral areas, while directly meeting urgent needs not covered by others NGOs. Activities include routine liaison and information exchange with Iraqi refugee communities, mobilisation of local NGOs through funded sub-projects and advocacy at local and national levels. Additionally, DRC provides direct support through non-food winterisation and educational assistance, and management of a *special needs fund* to meet urgent individual and household needs on an ad hoc basis. Proposed project outputs include:

- 4,000 Iraqis assisted through information outreach and service referrals.
- 23 local NGOs working with Iraqis supported with small projects funds.
- 1,400 school children receive school supplies.
- 400 families receive winter non-food assistance (heating & other items).
- 450 urgent cases assisted with special needs funds.

Strategic

Protection and promotion of appropriate solutions to displacement-affected

objective of programme	populations on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights.
Immediate objectives of programme	<p><u>a. Palestinian Refugee Protection Project:</u> Increased protection for marginalised and underserved Palestinian refugees in Lebanon</p> <p><u>b. Enhanced Economic and Educational Opportunities for Palestinian Refugees in Ein el Hilweh camp</u> Increased educational and income generation opportunities for youth in Ein el Hilweh camp</p> <p><u>c. Civil Society Support and Community Outreach for Iraqis</u> Increased civil society capacities to respond to the needs of Iraqi refugees through outreach, networking, project support and advocacy at local and national levels</p> <p><u>d. Non-food and emergency assistance for Iraqi refugees</u> To support the care and maintenance of an estimated 1,200 Iraqi families through the provision of basic winter NFI, school kits, and/or emergency assistance</p>
Target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Palestinian refugees, communities & civil society ▪ Iraqi refugees
Main sector(s) /type(s) of intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness raising & Advocacy/ Protection ▪ Information management ▪ Legal aid and counselling ▪ Non-food assistance ▪ Livelihood support ▪ Capacity development ▪ Education
List of donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO) ▪ British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) ▪ Lisa og Gudmund Joergensens Fond ▪ U.S. Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM)
MAIN DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PAST QUARTER	
Main external developments and challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The past quarter has been very calm on the political front. Lebanese parties and politicians are preparing for upcoming elections in early June 2009 ▪ Diplomatic ties between Lebanon and Syria have continued to improve,

faced during the past quarter – in terms of politics, displacement situation and security

- though full diplomatic functions are not yet in place.
- Several hundred Christian Iraqis arrived in Lebanon during the last quarter, fleeing targeted sectarian violence in Iraq.

Main internal achievements and challenges during the past quarter

a. Palestinian Refugee Protection:

A new ECHO-funded protection project only started in mid-March.. Activities to date include the recruitment of some of the project staff, including a project manager, bilateral & multilateral meetings with local and international NGOs, UNRWA and other stakeholders.

Using private funds, DRC was able to assist one non-ID beneficiary with stay permit fees. Caseload of non-IDs wishing to legalise their status through stay permits is decreasing, since they fear they would lose their right to claim for the special cards for non-ID refugees, issued by the same authority issuing the stay permit.

b. Enhanced Economic and Educational Opportunities for Palestinian Refugees in Ein el Hilweh camp

Education

- NGO teacher training contracted to the University of St. Joseph is going well. The initial 60-hour training course was completed and the 20-hour follow-up coaching for each trainee is taking place in March and April. The training program targets 19 NGO teachers (initially 20, with 1 trainee dropping out) of remedial education and literacy from 9 local NGOs.
- DRC finalised agreements with 4 local NGOs (Association Najdeh, Compatriot Association, Solidarity Association for Social and Cultural Development (SASCD), and Nabila Breir Association) to provide remedial education to 311 at-risk students and 7 dropouts. Completed and ongoing activities include selection of beneficiaries according to set criteria, meeting with parents of beneficiaries to ensure their commitment, hiring appropriate teachers and counsellors, and starting classes. DRC's Education Advisor has been monitoring the entire process day by day, working with each individual NGO, and providing support and guidance where needed.
- As with remedial classes, DRC finalised an agreement with another local NGO, to provide school drop-outs with literacy classes. The DRC-supported classes began in January.
- DRC attended over 20 meetings with key stakeholders at national and local levels to discuss various aspects of the DRC project, and to solicit support and cooperation. In addition, during the quarter, DRC began field

visits to gather information for a quarterly newsletter intended for information-sharing/advocacy purposes. With a number of activities well underway, DRC aimed to capture some of the project's progress in a form that would maximize dissemination about the project and its objectives.

Employment/Livelihood

- In December 2008, DRC signed an agreement with the Palestinian Arab Women League (PAWL) to conduct training for 40 youth on how to start and run a business. The first 5-day training, 'How to start your business' was held in January for 24 youth from EHC. Trainees were expected to present ideas for a potential business. From the group of 24, PAWL's technical team met with 10 trainees to further discuss the feasibility of business ideas. Thus far, 7 individuals (4 females, 3 males) have been selected to receive an in-kind grant to start their own businesses.
- Through a project with the Najdeh Association, DRC is supporting 15 Palestinian nursing students (from ages 18-24) with final year tuition fees. The purpose is to assist youth who would otherwise have a difficult time completing their education. DRC visited all students with their parents to ensure selection was done according to vulnerability criteria set out for the project. Students are expected to take final exams in June/July, after which time Najdeh will be working with them search for job possibilities.
- As reported during last quarter, DRC still continues to search for an appropriate local partner for the job/apprenticeship counselling and placement component.

c & d. Civil Society Support and Community Outreach for Iraqis / Non-food and emergency assistance for Iraqi refugees

Information & Outreach Activities:

- DRC completed the 1st Arabic language newsletter for Iraqis and printed 4,000 copies. 3,325 copies were delivered to UNHCR and 10 NGOs (local and international) for dissemination and most of the rest were distributed by DRC staff. This first report was mainly a directory of organizations assisting refugees, with details of the services they provide, along with beneficiary criteria and contact information. Initial feedback from the Iraqis has been very positive.
- DRC prepared and disseminated the first quarterly stakeholder report to relevant stakeholders. The report included quantitative and qualitative information related to the Iraqis DRC has been in contact with. Quantitative information included percentages of Iraqi distribution according to geographical area, household size, gender and age division, UNHCR registration, employment and income distribution. Qualitative information has focused on trends, issues and concerns identified by DRC outreach team. Finally, the first report included a list of services available to Iraqis in Lebanon
- During outreach meetings, 71 individuals participated in organised group discussions. 219 additional individuals (representing 624 family members) were visited by DRC outreach staff during household visits for assessment

of potential vulnerabilities and/or sharing relevant information.

- 105 Iraqi families/individuals were assessed for special needs assistance. Of these, 54 cases were assisted directly by DRC, 19 cases were referred to other NGOs providing the service/item requested, 3 cases were rejected, and 20 cases remain pending. Examples of assistance given include medical treatment (often cost-shared with other NGOs), household furnishings and appliances, children's clothing, and one-off rent support.

Sub-grants to local NGOs:

- In response to DRC's first call for proposals in December 2009, 20 proposals were received from local NGOs requesting funds in support of small projects targeting Iraqis. Following intensive review, 3 of these proposals were approved for funding, many were rejected outright as not fitting project criteria, and several are still undergoing assessment and negotiation. The 3 projects approved provide therapy and awareness-raising on gender-based violence for women and children (abused and suspected of being abused) and support sports activities for Iraqi detainees and youth in prison. An additional call for proposals will be made in April.

NFI Distribution:

- Of the more than 800 Iraqi households assessed by DRC staff for winter NFI needs, 588 vulnerable families received tailored winter assistance packages including carpets, lighting, heaters, and/or blankets, as needed. Distributions took place in most regions of Lebanon, with the majority of beneficiaries located in Mount Lebanon. Priority was given to female-headed households, large families (over 6 household members), and families with elderly and/or infants and/or handicapped/ill household members.
- In a follow-up survey of a sample of 200 families whose children received school kits in the previous reporting quarter, 95% stated both that they were satisfied to very satisfied with the quality of the kits and that they found all of the items in the kits useful.

Main funding developments during the past quarter

ECHO has approved DRC's proposal for the new Palestinian Refugee Protection Project to further develop and support community and duty-bearer capacities in general while continuing to support the non-ID refugees. The project runs 12 months from 16 March and is budgeted at 500,000 EUR.

The Lisa og Gudmund Joergensens Fond donated an additional 100,000 DKK to extend further legal and other assistance to the non-ID Palestinians.