Report #3 on the situation in Ein el Hilweh camp, Lebanon
5 August 2023,

Overview

Following intense fighting in Ein el Hilweh camp over the night of 2-3 August, a fragile ceasefire largely held throughout Thursday 3 August and into the morning of Saturday 5 August. Only one breach of the ceasefire was reported on 3 August: the killing of an individual who was reported on social media to be affiliated with an Islamist group. The death toll from the clashes stands at 13 according to reports from the Palestine Red Crescent hospital in Saida. On the night of 3 August, UNRWA publicly called for an immediate cessation of fighting to allow the Agency to provide assistance to those inside the camp and to conduct needs assessments.

The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have opened all camp entrances but there has been no official pronouncement by relevant authorities that the security situation would permit the return of residents. Nevertheless, some residents reportedly entered the camp on Friday to survey damage to property. Extensive damage to shelters, other buildings and infrastructure has been reported within the camp and in adjacent areas. Particularly severe damage has been reported in Taamir, Tawari and Baraksat neighbourhoods (all adjacent to the camp), and Safsaf and Hattin sectors within the camp. However, UNRWA is unable to undertake a comprehensive damage assessment until the ceasefire proves sustainable and a survey and clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) can be carried out. UNRWA and the Saida municipality invited for an initial meeting local NGO partners and UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP) on 4 August to coordinate the immediate relief response in emergency shelters. Further discussed was coordination around access to the camp, training on identification and removal of unexploded ordnances (UXOs), and an infrastructure damage assessment process that may feed into humanitarian efforts supporting persons with destroyed habitat.

Thousands of families are estimated to have been displaced by the fighting. As of Friday 4 August, emergency centres in UNRWA installations were still accommodating large numbers of individuals fleeing the fighting: Nablus School (Saida town) was hosting 67 families comprising 250 individuals, including four persons with disabilities, 134 children and 10 older persons. Askalan School (Mieh Mieh camp) was hosting 57 families comprising 289 individuals, including 12 persons with disabilities, 162 children and nine older persons. Siblin Training Centre was hosting 13 families. The temporary emergency shelters in UNRWA schools will be closed once the security situation in the camp has been confirmed as stable.

Ein El Hilweh camp information

- UNRWA provides services to nearly 55,000 registered Palestine Refugees in Ein El Hilweh camp.
- Eight UNRWA schools serve around 6000 students.
- Two UNRWA health centres provide primary health care including reproductive health, infant and child-care, immunizations, screening and medical check-ups and treatment.

* This figure does not claim to represent the actual number of Palestine Refugees present in the camp, but merely the number of Palestine Refugees registered with UNRWA in the camp.
Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management and Assessment

- The response to the influx of people into emergency centres is being coordinated with local and international partners, including UNICEF and UNHCR and its implementing partners Nabaa, MAP, ARCPA, Najdeh and Tadamon, as well as Save the Children, Première Urgence Internationale, NRC, ICRC and ANERA. Additional organisations providing specific relief and goods to the centres are discussed further below.

- UNRWA, together with the Saida municipality, hosted a coordination meeting for humanitarian actors to ensure the alignment and efficiency of responses to the clashes and mass displacement of camp residents. The meeting, held at the Saida municipality building, focused on an assessment of needs and coordination of the next phase of the response, including the return of camp residents to their homes once security conditions allow.

Humanitarian response and needs

- **Food security:** Partners, including Vision Engineering, Al Ma’aoun Association, Arab Heritage, Palestinian Red Cross and Qatari Red Cross, continue to provide meals, snacks and drinking water to those sheltering at UNRWA’s emergency centres.

- **Non-food Items:** Partners, including UNICEF, UNHCR, Palestinian Red Cross, the Women’s Union, and People’s Aid for Relief and Development, provided a variety of essential items to those in the emergency centres, including diapers and other items for infants, hygiene items, underwear and cleaning supplies.

- **WASH:** UNRWA continues to distribute water to UNRWA emergency centres via tankers. Repair and maintenance of sanitary and bathroom facilities is ongoing at these centres.

- **Health:** UNRWA has provided the Human Call Association’s al-Nida’a Hospital – located within Ein el Hilweh camp – with 8,000 litres of oil to ensure generators can be kept running. The hospital urgently requires significant amounts of medications and medical supplies to treat those wounded in clashes. In addition, a further 75 displaced persons have been treated by the UNRWA Saida Polyclinic, 24 patients by the Mieh Mieh UNRWA Health Centre, and 16 by the Iqlim el Kharroub UNRWA Health Centre.

- **Shelter:** The installation of solar lighting systems in outside areas has been completed in Nablus School and is underway at Askalan School; these lights were provided by Première Urgence. Repairs to buildings and electrical fixtures at both schools and Siblin Training Centre (STC) are well advanced. To ensure electricity and water supply at the emergency centres, UNRWA has ordered 10,000 litres of oil for two water wells and the generators serving the centres. Insecticide and vector-control campaigns will be carried out in the emergency centres from 4 August.

- **Camp infrastructure:** While UNRWA personnel have been unable to assess and begin repairing damaged infrastructure inside Ein el Hilweh, on 4 August UNRWA, in coordination with ICRC, is providing 5,000 litres of diesel to ensure water wells and electrical generators inside the camp can operate.

- **Protection:** On Friday 4 August, UNRWA hosted a meeting of organisations working on gender-based violence (GBV) issues to coordinate support in emergency centres. UNRWA has social workers and school counsellors present who are providing case management and are referring
and coordinating with relevant partners on GBV response and prevention. UNRWA Protection staff visited all three UNRWA emergency centers on 4 August to undertake rapid assessments.

Future needs and action

- Provision of one-off, emergency cash assistance aimed to support families’ recovery process, including rehabilitation works to their houses partially or entirely damaged by the fighting, as they return to the camp.

- Rehabilitation of affected UNRWA schools in the camp.

- Removal of rubble, clearing of roads, and repair and maintenance of critical infrastructure in the camp, including water supply, wells and wastewater systems.

- Identification and mitigation of risks posed by UXOs, in cooperation with technical experts in the field. Training of UNRWA frontline staff and partners will be carried out on identification and removal of UXOs.