Mieh Mieh refugee camp is located south of the city of Saida. The camp was established in 1954 and extends over an area of 54,000 sq m.

Mieh Mieh refugee camp survived a series of major events in 1982, when the Israeli invasion destroyed many of the camp’s shelters. These shelters were not rebuilt, and alternative shelters were built instead along the southern border of the camp. This section is not an official part of the camp and is known as the Wadi sector. The camp suffered further damage in July of 1991 due to clashes between Palestinian militant groups and the Lebanese army.

The ongoing Syria crisis has also led to the additional presence of Syrian refugees and Palestine refugees from Syria (PRS) in the camp.

Security and governance in the camp are the responsibility of Popular Committees and Palestinian Factions. Access for people and building materials is controlled by the Lebanese Armed Forces through check points.

UNRWA in Mieh Mieh Camp

General information
- Established: 1945 for Armenian refugees. In 1963, the camp was placed under UNRWA management.
- Size: 0.063 sq km
- UNRWA registered persons: 6158 as of March 2023
- Total population: 2359 according to the official Population and Housing Census of Palestinian Camps and Gatherings in Lebanon of July 2017
- Places of origin of Palestine refugees: Saffouriyah, al-Tireh, Haifa and Mirun

Main UNRWA installations serving the camp:
- Community and Camp Services Office: 1
- Health Centre: 1
- School: 1

UNRWA employees serving the camp:
- Administration: 1
- Health: 11
- Education: 30
- Sanitation Services: 5

Education
There is one UNRWA school in the camp, which provides basic education for more than 470 students from grade one to grade nine.
Health
Mieh Mieh camp has one UNRWA health centre providing primary health care. Health services in the camp include general curative care and specialized consultations, prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health, provision of maternal and child health, and school health campaigns. The centre receives an average of 63 patients per day. It also includes a pharmacy, a dental care unit and a laboratory for essential tests.

In addition, UNRWA cover a percentage of hospitalization expenses by Palestine refugees. The majority of them do not benefit from any external forms of health insurance and rely on UNRWA’s support. The agency supports both secondary and tertiary health care through yearly contracts with hospitals including the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) as well as private and governmental hospitals. Despite the support provided by UNRWA, many patients have difficulties in paying for their share of the costs.

Relief and Social Services
A core focus for social protection is providing Social Safety Net (SSN) support to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees to ensure that they are better able to meet their basic food needs. Assistance is issued quarterly to more than 262 families (848 individuals) in the camp. UNRWA underwent a reform to strengthen social service interventions through professionalizing its social workers. Through this reform, a family-based approach has been provided to support beneficiaries, helping strengthen their psychosocial resilience and social inclusion. Community-based organizations (CBOs) in Mieh Mieh Camp also provide services including social development, recreational activities, employment opportunities for women and activities for the elderly. UNRWA works closely with several of these CBOs to support vulnerable persons in the camp.

Infrastructure and Camp Improvement
The camp’s infrastructure was rebuilt in 2006 and is still in a good condition. Water is available in all shelters on a daily basis. UNRWA sanitation services include the collection and disposal of solid waste; the cleaning of roads and streets; insect and rodent control; maintenance of water; and sewer and storm water systems. These services were expanded following the Syria crisis and the additional influx of people. There is a high demand for the rehabilitation of shelters in this camp. The entry of building materials for the rehabilitation of shelters and infrastructure requires permissions from the Lebanese authorities.

UNRWA is not responsible for provision of electricity in the camp: a few hours a day are provided by the Lebanese national grid, and generators are operated by private entities. Since 2021, the cost of electricity has risen dramatically with the rising cost of fuel, making it increasingly out of range for some, and leading to changes in daily life such as not running a fridge or limiting hours of electricity at night.

Protection
As elsewhere in Lebanon, restrictions on Palestine refugees right to work in addition to the ongoing socio-economic crisis in the country have led to high levels of poverty in the camp. Security and governance are the responsibility of Palestinian factions. The Lebanese criminal justice system does not reach inside the camp which can lead to difficulties in accessing justice. There are occasional violent incidents in the camp as personal disputes often escalate. While people move freely in and out of the camp, young men and women describe how they feel safer inside.

Lebanon’s worsening socioeconomic situation has exacerbated the mental health and psychosocial needs of many in the camp, particularly given the existing vulnerabilities of the Palestine refugee community before the crisis. Increasing stress has contributed to greater tensions or conflict within families and between individuals. Street crime, drug use and theft have increased as poverty and desperation grow. Violence against women and children is an ongoing concern, and the economic crisis has led to an increase in gender-based violence, child marriage, school dropout, child labour and overall parental neglect as parents struggle with the situation. UNRWA works with partner organizations on gender-based violence, mental health, psychosocial support and child protection programmes. The Agency also provides legal aid and emergency cash assistance and participates in activities such as campaigns to tackle harassment, bullying and drug abuse.

Crammed living conditions and unregulated building remain protection concerns, with many shelters in precarious conditions and at risk of crumbling, and poor accessibility for persons with a disability and older persons. Electricity shortages and poorly lighted public pathways also leave women and children particularly vulnerable at night.

The ongoing Syria crisis has led to the presence of Syrian refugees and PRS in the camp, putting further strain on infrastructure and increasing competition for informal employment. As many PRS have entered Lebanon irregularly, their lack of regular legal status puts them at risk of detention and deportation.

Profile: Mieh Mieh Camp

UNRWA Lebanon Public Information Office | LFO.PIO@unrwa.org