



Statement on The Shortage of Food and Medicine for Children in Lebanon Including the Syrian Refugees' Children



The collapse of the value of the Lebanese pound and the high levels of inflation led to a sharp rise in food prices, in conjunction with the poverty rate of the majority of the Lebanese people reaching unprecedented high levels, which exacerbated the difficulties in securing basic consumables such as food and medicine. The economic difficulties that Lebanon is experiencing have weighed heavily not only on the Lebanese people, with their marginalized and most marginalized groups, but also on the vast majority of refugees in Lebanon, including Syrian refugees. Years of asylum, economic decline, and the coronavirus pandemic, in addition to a sharp reduction in funding for the humanitarian response, have pushed the exhausted refugee community to the brink of starvation, and food insecurity rates are growing exponentially.

The World Bank has previously announced that nearly 90% of Syrian refugees are unable to afford what is considered the minimum living standard¹. Given the severe economic crisis and the Lebanese government's policies to rationalize or remove subsidies on basic materials, Lebanon is experiencing a shortage of medicines for chronic diseases, regular pain relievers. Also, infant formula no.1 and 2, which are given for children under the age of one, are unavailable, and if they are to be found, they are at exorbitant prices and the same thing with regard to medicines². Which further exposes more children to the throes of hunger because their families are unable to purchase food from local markets. Many of them live on the minimum amount of food, which leads to severe and persistent malnutrition, and detriments to their physical and mental development, especially during the first years of their lives. A rapid assessment conducted by UNICEF in April 2021 also found that more than three in ten families with at least one child went to bed hungry or skipped a meal due to the elevated prices of products and food.³

Moreover, due to restrictions on adult Syrian refugees' access to the labor market in Lebanon, children are often forced to become the family provider or breadwinner, and leave school permanently, depriving them of their right to education.

What children in general ,and refugee children in particular ,are facing in Lebanon is a clear violation of their right to access food ,and securing it for all is an obligation of states ,as one of the elements of the right to an adequate standard of living in accordance with the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Economic ,Social and Cultural Rights](#) ,which considered being free from hunger a fundamental right for all .Moreover ,it is an obligation for States Parties ,through their individual efforts and through international cooperation ,to take measures including concrete programs necessary to ensure this right for all .The [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) also obligates states parties to guarantee that: "Every child, without discrimination, has the right to education, health, protection and the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical ,mental ,spiritual ,moral and social development .And that States Parties shall take all necessary measures to this end ,foremost among which is to combat disease and malnutrition through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water ,to ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children ,to make primary education available free to all ;providing financial relief where necessary ,in addition to the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation".

¹ [A press release on the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon](#)

² The source is the Asylum Department of the Violations Documentation Program

³ [UNICEF assessment of hunger and the inability to secure a livelihood for Syrians in Lebanon](#)



In light of the aforementioned information ,the signatory organizations to this statement appeal to the new Lebanese government ,the international community ,and the relevant international and national bodies:

- To consider the best interests of the child over all considerations ,to provide a healthy environment and appropriate protection for children in Lebanon ,including the Syrian refugees 'children and to accelerate the implementation of practical measures and procedures to ensure their access to food and medicine ,in tandem with the provision of humanitarian food and medical assistance to the rest of the most affected groups.
- That states fulfill their obligations to take combined and separate measures to ensure the realization of the right to food in other countries ,to protect and facilitate access to this right ,and to provide the necessary assistance upon request ,in accordance with Article 56 of the Charter of the United Nations and Articles /11/ and /12/ and /23/ of the International Covenant on Economic ,Social and Cultural Rights and of the [Rome Declaration of the World Food Summit](#).
- That states fulfill their obligations under the United Nations Charter to cooperate in providing disaster relief and emergency humanitarian assistance ,including assistance to refugees and permanently displaced persons .And that each country contributes to this endeavor according to its capabilities.
- To exert efforts to fight malnutrition and to ensure the adoption and implementation of a national food policy for children in Lebanon ,regardless of their legal status ,and to cooperate at the international level to develop programs such as the joint program between the World Health Organization and UNICEF "Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses "to ensure the availability and sustainability of food for all under 18 years of age.
- That food organizations starting with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ,the World Food Program ,the International Fund for Agricultural Development ,the United Nations Development Program ,the United Nations Children's Fund) UNICEF ,(the World Bank and regional development banks, should coordinate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and all relevant actors ,including civil society actors ,to ensure that Syrian refugees have adequate food.
- International financial institutions ,in particular [the International Monetary Fund](#) and the World Bank to incorporate the protection of the right to food in their lending policies and credit agreements and to take into consideration the needs of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon and protect their right to adequate food when proposing or offering any programs or loans to the Lebanese Republic.





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