



NOOR EL-SALAM

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Summer Edition Newsletter

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Changing Environment for Syrian Refugees

The economic situation in Lebanon continues to be volatile, while politically there is a six-month deadlock in setting up the elections for the next President. Given the Arab countries' rapprochement with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, many in the government are looking to ease the economic burden of refugees in country by repatriating them to Syria. There have been reports of forced relocation in the Bekaa Valley region near the Syrian border, which is not far from the Hermel School. See AP Report, May 3, 2023.

<https://apnews.com/article/lebanon-refugees-syria-arrests-deportations-356d55f1412f830b6521180c5390a869>



Hermel School - End of Year

Nearly half of the children are no longer attending school, both because of their parents' fears and because they are working in the fields for extra income. Those children who are attending have been given end-of-year exams. We are evaluating the feasibility of a summer program to provide continuity and activities for students and families.

Noor El-Salam at a Crossroads

When Noor El-Salam was founded, the political and economic landscape in Lebanon was much different. We also had what appeared to be a viable working relationship with a reliable partner in Hermel. The situation has changed dramatically, both nationally in Lebanon and locally in Hermel. Though we have tried different solutions to keep the school open next year, it ultimately may not be possible. As one possibility, the Board is looking for other educational opportunities in southern Lebanon (closer to Amine's family) which would be easier to monitor from abroad. Alternately we may partner with another NGO in Lebanon with similar humanitarian objectives.

Looking Forward & Next Steps

While in Beirut, we met with Anera, a mature NGO working with refugees in three Arab countries. We are currently exploring options to partner with them, or one of the other NGOs we met with, in Lebanon.

Now as always, we are grateful for your support. Your contributions made school possible for nearly 100 children this past year. We are confident the learning and nurturing program they experienced will have a lifelong impact on them even if we are unable to continue. Noor will grow and prosper even as we reluctantly must pivot.

Respectfully,

Amine and Susan

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