Protection Sector Analysis Report

December 2024 – March 2025

Protection Sector, Lebanon

Introduction

This Protection Sector Analysis Report by the Protection Working Group covers the recent developments in Lebanon, focusing on the period following the ceasefire announcement in Lebanon on 27 November 2024 and the cross-border displacement of Syrians following the fall of the Assad government in Syria. This report provides an overview of the protection situation from December 2024 to March 2025 focusing on emerging trends, key protection risks and the ongoing protection response. It is based on available qualitative and quantitative data from Protection sector partners. During this period, Lebanon faced ongoing challenges related to displacement, infrastructure damage, and rising humanitarian needs.

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Key Figures

1,110 **ceasefire violations**

61 **civilians killed**

26% **of facilities providing Clinical Management of Rape Services were damaged** during the escalation

Over 900,000 **IDPs returned to their cadaster of origin** within 2 weeks of the ceasefire

965,360 **IDPs returned to their Cadaster of Origin**

More than 97,000 **Syrians presumed to have returned to Syria** following the fall of the Assad government

93,306 **remaining IDPs**

119,000 **people arrived from Syria to Lebanon** following the fall of the Assad government

35 **measures limiting return of Syrian IDPs within Lebanon** to their original place of residence in Lebanon

About 50,000 **people received information on protection, Child Protection and GBV issues, rights and services** following the ceasefire *(until end March)*

21% of key informants across all populations reported **theft and looting to be a key protection concern**

41% of key informants across all populations reported **psychosocial support to be a key protection risk among IDPs and returning IDPs**

18% **of Syrians have legal residency**

The protection sector is projected to have **30-35% less funding in 2025 than 2024 unless additional funding is secured**

Evolving Context

8 October 2023
Start of violent clashes between Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Hezbollah and other armed groups in Lebanon, primarily along the Blue Line as a spillover of the situation in Gaza

Mid-September 2024
The intensity and scope of the conflict escalated significantly, with airstrikes extending across Lebanon including Beirut. Significant casualties and displacement

27 November 2024
A 60-day ceasefire is declared between Lebanon and Israel

9 January 2025
Lebanon's army chief Joseph Aoun was elected as the country's president, ending a power vacuum that lasted for over two years

13 January 2025
Lebanese President, Joseph Aoun, appointed Nawaf Salam as the country's Prime Minister and tasked him with forming a government and pulling Lebanon out of the economic crisis

18 February 2025
Although due to expire on 26 January 2025, due to allegations of incomplete implementation of the ceasefire, it was extended until 18 February 2025

By the end of February 2025
the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) had deployed to southern towns near the Lebanon-Israel border. However, Israeli Forces remained in five key locations, Al Awaida, Al Aziyah, Al Hamames, Jabal Bilat, and Labbouneh

Despite the ceasefire, Israeli airstrikes continued. The Lebanese authorities have reported around 1,100 ceasefire violation, resulting more than 100 deaths of which an estimated 61 are civilians and over 330 injuries

Between February and March 2025
tensions have risen significantly along the Lebanese-Syrian border, particularly in the Baalbek-Hermel region. Clashes occurred between Syrian armed forces and Lebanese tribal groups and families, resulting at least seven people killed and 52 wounded

6 March 2025
Conflict in the coastal areas of Lattakia and Tartous in Syria resulted in over 24,000 new arrivals from Syria to North Lebanon by end of March

End of March 2025
The fall of the Assad government in Syria on 8 December resulted in over 119,000 new arrivals from Syria by the end of March 2025, primarily to the El Hermel and Bekaa districts

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Key messages

Civilians continue to suffer from the impact of the armed conflict.

The impact of the armed conflict had and continues to have a devastating impact on civilians of all nationalities in Lebanon. Entire areas of the country remain uninhabitable. The ceasefire has reduced the intensity of shelling but sporadic military operations continue, including air/drone strikes, and several areas are still occupied by Israeli forces. The armed conflict has further created and exacerbated a range of protection and mental health issues. As armed conflict continues, protection of civilians and respect for IHL must be ensured.

IDPs of all nationalities must be supported to return within Lebanon.

The ceasefire has seen over 900,000 IDPs return to their cadasters[1] but many remain in need of a wide range of humanitarian assistance to ensure a durable solution to their displacement. Reconstruction and repair to damaged civilian infrastructure must be supported by local and international actors. Specific barriers for Syrians IDPs to return to their original residence in Lebanon need to be addressed (see below).

The fall of the Assad government in Syria has created both new opportunities for voluntary return of Syrians and new arrivals with distinct protection concerns.

The situation in Syria remains complex and uncertain. Syrians who wish to return should be supported to do so in safety and dignity. While risks related to persecution by the former Government have ceased, other risks may persist or even become more pronounced. Given the volatile and evolving security dynamics in Syria, UNHCR continues calling on States to allow civilians fleeing Syria access to their territories, to ensure respect for the principle of non-refoulement at all times, and not to forcibly return of Syrian nationals and former habitual residents of Syria, including Palestinians previously residing in Syria, to any part of Syria.[2]

Expand access to legal residency.

Authorities should expand and facilitate legal stay for Syrians, Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS), refugees of other nationalities and migrants. Freedom of movement should be assured for non-Lebanese, and any measures such as curfews or raids must not be arbitrary and must be done in line with the rule of law and international human rights standards.

Protection and Humanitarian assistance must be provided to all those in need impartially.

Persistent inequalities in access to service and rights must be addressed including in access to shelter and to support for IDP returns. Donors should support authorities and humanitarian actors in their efforts to provide services for the most vulnerable across all populations.

Humanitarian actors, authorities and government must address the cross-sectoral drivers of protection risks.

Protection risks are driven by range of factors, including poverty, lack of shelter and education. Addressing protection risks thus requires support to safe, decent work as well as sustained provision of cash assistance to the most vulnerable. Addressing barriers for Syrians and PRS to access quality education and scaling up support to shelter including both rental support as well as financial support for those returning to damaged homes.

Promote social cohesion and address community tensions.

All actors should scale up communication with communities and implement systematically feedback and response mechanisms to clearly communicate the aid that is provided to all communities based on need. The Government of Lebanon and other leaders should continue to reinforce the importance of solidarity, and counter harmful divisive rhetoric to promote social stability and the safety of all communities.

Invest in prevention, mitigation and response to all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.

Violence in the community, gender-based violence, violence against children and economic exploitation have all increased dramatically because of the conflict escalation, economic situation and displacement. Protection including child protection and GBV services must be prioritized for available funding.

Scale up psychosocial support and mental health services.

The psychosocial and mental health support needs are widespread among all populations and segments of the society, particularly for those in the most conflict-affected areas and those arriving from Syria who witnessed violence including GBV. Donors and the humanitarian community must prioritise these crucial services, including mental health services for the most affected population and frontline humanitarian workers.

Address the exclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

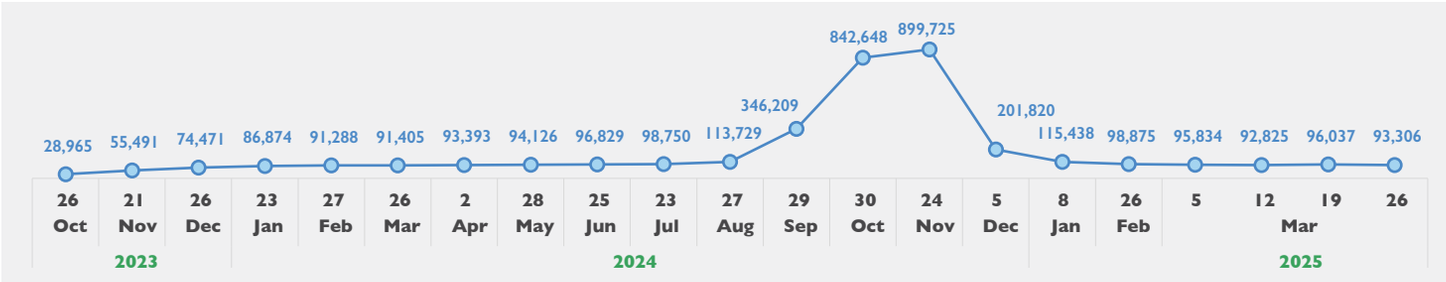
The conflict and displacement have highlighted once more the exclusion of persons with disabilities. Authorities and the humanitarian community must ensure that the response in all sectors is inclusive of the needs of persons with disabilities and work closely with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities to identify and implement concrete actions.

[1] A Cadaster is the administrative level of government below a district.
[2] https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/113771

Internal displacement and movement to and from Syria

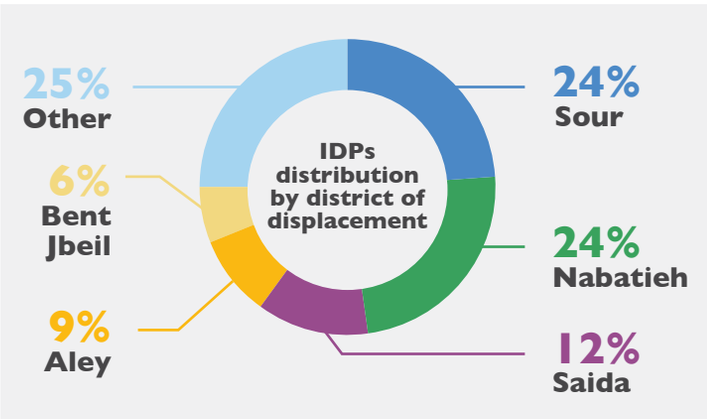
Refugees, IDPs of all nationalities and returning IDPs, vulnerable Lebanese including those who remained in conflict affected areas and migrants have all been affected by the conflict in Lebanon and the changes in Syria during this period. This has resulted in different displacement and movements to areas of return within Lebanon as well as movement to and from Syria during this period.

IDPs and returning IDPs



At the height of the conflict, an estimated 1 million IDPs were displaced throughout the country including Lebanese, secondarily displaced Syrians, other refugees including Palestinians and migrants. This included 188,000 IDPs, the vast majority Lebanese, who were staying in 1,175 emergency shelters while others stayed with relatives, rented lodging, or remained in conflict zones due to limited options.

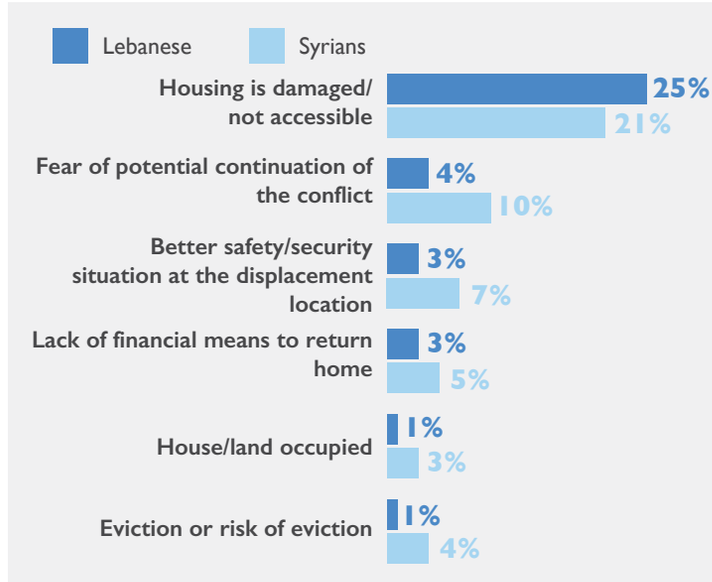
Following the ceasefire, the speed of return of IDPs closer to their area of origin was extraordinary, with over 786,000 of almost a million IDPs moving to their pre-ceasefire cadaster within one week of the ceasefire, and almost 903,000 moving within two weeks (by December 12, 2024). As of 27 March 2025, 965,360 have returned to their pre-conflict cadasters.[3] For many of these returning IDPs, the return to their cadasters of origin has not meant a durable solution to their displacement. Many homes are uninhabitable due to damage or destruction (see above), damaged areas lack basic services like water and electricity (see below), and there are ongoing risks from unexploded ordinance and continued shooting and shelling.[4] In addition, Syrian IDPs faced challenges to return with only 64% of Syrians returning to their area of origin within Lebanon immediately following the ceasefire, compared to 82% of Lebanese.[5] It is estimated that 70% of the Palestine Refugees in Tyre —around 39,900 individuals—were displaced at the peak of the emergency.[6]



As of 27 March, over 93,000 people remain displaced in Lebanon.[7] The vast majority of those who remain displaced are in the South and Nabatieh governorates and the main reasons they are unable to return is due to destruction of housing, safety concerns including fear of continuation of the conflict, political developments in Syria (among Syrians) and lack of financial means.[8]

Lack of basic services were also reported as barriers to return (see below). For those who remain displaced, the availability of long-term shelter solutions remains limited. Rental prices have increased in urban areas, straining the financial resources of displaced families. Syrian refuges and migrant workers remain hesitant to return to the southern regions due to access restrictions, rental barriers, and ongoing discrimination. Following the ceasefire, at least 35 measures were announced in the South by 25 municipalities and 8 non-state actors, preventing Syrian refugees to return to their villages of previous residency until further notice, as well as limiting their ability to rent accommodation to non-Lebanese, leaving them displaced and vulnerable.[9] Just under 1,700 Lebanese IDPs remain in 21 Collective shelters (as of March 20) – while the main reasons for these IDPs not to return are similar to those living in the host community described above, these IDPs also have a high level of vulnerability, with 81% of these IDPs having a person with a vulnerability, particularly health condition or person with disability, in their family.[10]

Reasons not to to return for IDPs



Movement to Syria under Duress: An estimated 557,000 individuals (63% Syrian, 37% Lebanese) crossed into Syria under duress (that is, due to adverse circumstances during the conflict in Lebanon) between September and 27 November 2024. Many Syrians who fled to Syria during the conflict were not amongst those known to UNHCR Lebanon. Of those known to UNHCR and where data was available in Syria, 44 % returned to Lebanon within three months. (see below for more information on cross-border movements).

[3] IOM Mobility Snapshot - Round 82 - 27-03-2025 | Displacement Tracking Matrix
[4] Lebanon: UNHCR - Protection Monitoring Findings - December 2024
[5] Ibid
[6] No estimates are available for the Burj Barajneh Palestinian Camp area and surrounding areas.
[7] IOM Mobility Snapshot - Round 82 - 27-03-2025 | Displacement Tracking Matrix
[8] Returning IDPs situation.pdf and IDP Protection Monitoring Report, February 2025 (pending publication)
[9] Document - Lebanon: UNHCR - Protection Monitoring Findings - December 2024
[10] Returning IDPs situation 21 Feb with map.pdf - Google Drive

Returns to Syria following the ceasefire: The fall of the Assad Government in Syria on 8 December 2024 has renewed hopes among Syrian refugees about returning home. Among the refugee community in Lebanon, there were signs of excitement but also hesitancy due to the uncertainty in Syria. UNHCR estimates some 371,900 Syrians have crossed back to Syria via neighboring countries since 8 December 2024. Of this figure, some 123,328 are estimated to be Syrian individuals returning from or via Lebanon including up to 50% Syrians from abroad transiting through Lebanon or those with residency in Lebanon engaging in temporary or pendular movements. UNHCR in Lebanon regularly verifies reported returns of Syrians against its records. So far in 2025, 97,021 individuals have been inactivated from UNHCR's registration records in Lebanon due to verified or presumed return, including 65,417 individuals who fled during the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon in 2024 and who remained in Syria (see above).[11] In January, 24% of surveyed Syrians and 13% of PRS in Lebanon indicated plans to return home to Syria in the next 12 months[12] - for more information see below.

97,021 individuals have been inactivated from UNHCR's registration records in Lebanon due to verified or presumed return

New arrivals from Syria: The changes in Syria have also triggered a new wave of displacement from Syria to Lebanon. Between December 8, 2024, and March 31, 2025, UNHCR identified over 119,000 new arrivals across all governorates through various sources (primarily the government DRM Unit) of which 98,988 are estimated to be Syrians, and approximately 20,000 are Lebanese. Baalbek-El Hermel hosts the highest number of new arrivals (89,000), with Syrians making up approximately 77% (69,000). In February, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) with support of UNHCR and in collaboration with Intersos initiated a profiling exercise at the household level and including also those new arrivals in Bekaa and El Hermel. As of end of March 2025, nearly 7,600 household surveys have been already carried out. Prioritized needs identified so far include: 74% financial support/cash, 67% shelter/accommodation, 38% food, 24% employment/livelihood, 20% CRIs, 20% education, and 20% health services. Furthermore, 31% requested information on services and assistance, 16% legal support, 10% protection services for adolescent girls and women, 10% protection services for children, 6% support in family reunification, and 5% protection services for support to older persons. South, El Nabatieh and BML regions have significantly lower numbers (3,463 and 423 respectively), all Syrians. This data indicates that the Bekaa remains the primary entry point for new arrivals into Lebanon, primarily from Homs governorate. On the Lebanese side, arrivals are largely entering through Hezbollah-controlled areas, particularly in El Hermel.

From March 6 to 31, over 24,000 Syrians had arrived in the North and Akkar fleeing the escalating hostilities in the Tartous, Lattakia, Homs, and Hama Governorates of Syria. Over 17,000 people have arrived in 24 villages in Akkar governorate. The highest concentrations were in Massoudieh, Tall Bire, Hokr ed Dahri and Hissa. Districts in North Lebanon governorate, such as Tripoli (Jabal Mohsen), El Koura and Zgharta, have also received over 6,000 new arrivals[13].

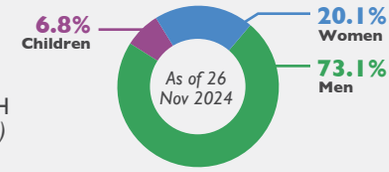
Other, dispersed, low scale arrivals, have also been reported in Beirut and other urban areas and contacted partners call centres and hotlines.

119,000 new arrivals across all governorates
98,988 are estimated to be Syrians

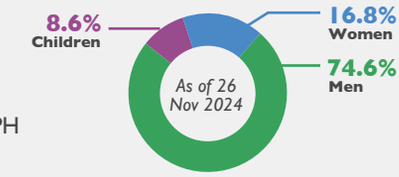
Key Protection Risks
Impact of the armed conflict

Casualties and injuries

4,267 Fatalities
According to MoPH
(As of 20 Mar 2025)



17,579 Injured
According to MoPH



6 Journalists killed
According to UNESCO

Attacks on health care

241 Health personnel killed

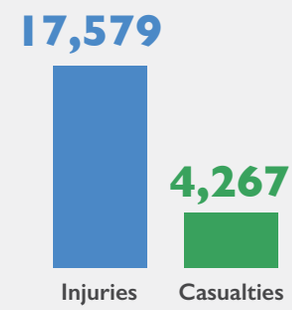
296 Health personnel injured

162 Attacks on health care

104 Attacks impacting transport

Since the beginning of the hostilities on 8 October 2023 until March 20, the conflict has claimed the lives of more than 4,267 people in Lebanon, including more than 1,100 women and children, 241 medical workers, and humanitarian staff has injured around 17,579 others.[14] The period of peak escalation from mid-September to the ceasefire on 27 November was the most deadly, resulting in over three times as many causalities and injured persons, a significant proportion of which were civilians, as there was since the start of hostilities to mid-September 2024.[15] In addition, UNRWA recorded four Israeli strikes targeting Palestine Refugee camps during the escalation: El Buss Camp on 29 September and 21 November, Ein el Hilweh Camp on 1 October, and Rashidieh Camp on 26 November. Furthermore, UNRWA recorded three strikes targeting Palestine refugees outside of the camps.These strikes inside and outside of camps resulted in at least 29 Palestinian fatalities.

Post-conflict impact casualties and injuries

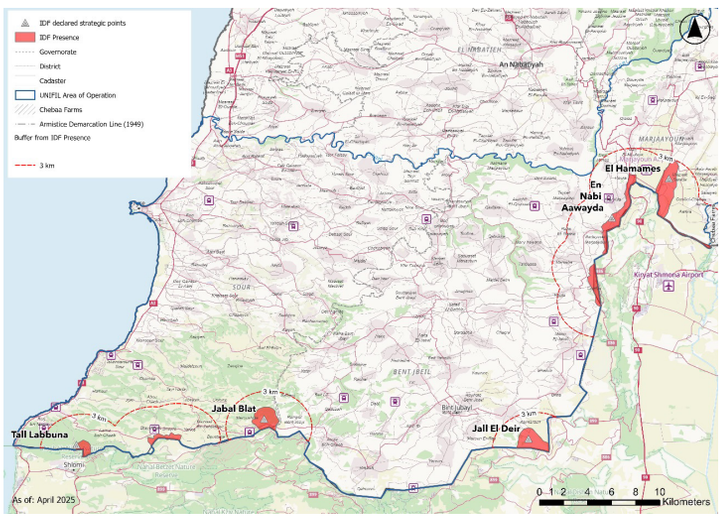


[11] UNHCR Lebanon, Syrian returns & movements snapshot, 31 March 2025
[12] https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/114221
[13] Updated figures from UNHCR. See also Lebanon: Flash update on new arrivals from Syria | Global Focus Lebanon: Flash update on new arrivals from Syria | Global Focus
[14] See Lebanon: At a Glance - Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 20 March 2025 [EN/AR] | OCHA. Figures for injuries and deaths are from the Lebanese Ministry of Health and do not distinguish between civilians and combatants.
[15] Lebanon: At a Glance - Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 09 January 2025

Since the ceasefire, the Lebanese authorities have reported a total of 1,100 ceasefire violations, resulting more than 100 deaths and over 330 injuries since November 28 to March 24.[16] This included the deaths of at least 61 civilians, including 10 women and 9 children, between 28 November 2024 and 24 March 2025, as per the initial review of incidents by OHCHR. On 22 March , following rocket fire from Lebanon into Northern Israel,[17] the Israeli forces responded with the most intense aerial bombardment in four months, resulting in the death of eight[18] people including a child and at least 40 others injured according to Lebanon's Ministry of Health. Initial review of the incidents by OHCRC suggests that of the eight people killed, four were civilians, including one child, one woman and two men. Post-ceasefire Israeli military operations have continued to take place in the areas of Tyre, Bentjbeil, Marjaayoun, Nabatieh and Saida and parts of the Bekaa Valley and Zahle after the ceasefire.

On 26 January 2025, the 60-day ceasefire agreement between Lebanon and Israel was set to expire, by which time Israel should have completed the withdrawal of its forces south of the Blue Line. However, Israel confirmed that it would continue its presence beyond the initial 60 days, insisting that the conditions for its withdrawal – the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in southern Lebanon with the retreat of Hezbollah north of the Litani river – had not been satisfied. On 26 January, upon expiration of the ceasefire deadline, Lebanese residents were determined to return to their southern villages, notwithstanding the continued military presence of Israeli forces. The ensuing confrontation between residents and Israeli military resulted in the latter opening fire and killing more than 20 people, including several children, and injuring more than 100 others according to Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon. As per initial review of the incidents by OHCHR, the fatalities included 17 civilians (5 women, 2 children, 10 men), 2 LAF soldiers and 3 militants. There were no reports or indications that returnees or LAF acted violently against Israeli forces.

While Israel has withdrawn from the majority of the area of Southern Lebanon it occurred during the escalation in late 2024, as of late March 2025, Israel retains control over a number of locations within Lebanese territory adjacent to the border in an estimated area of 10 sq kilometers in the South. The Israeli Army maintains its presence at five strategic points and media reports indicate that the Israeli Army is enforcing four so-called buffer zones along the Blue Line within Lebanon, within which no Lebanese presence is accepted.



The armed conflict has also led to widespread destruction and damage of civilian infrastructure (including schools, hospitals, religious and cultural sites) and agricultural land, has severely interrupted access to essential services including education and healthcare, and has had a significant impact on livelihoods (see below). The conflict has been particularly detrimental for groups in vulnerable situations including women and children, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrant workers and refugees as well as other groups marginalized based on their legal or social status or gender who have faced greater exposure to unequal access to shelter, exploitation, abuse, and exclusion from services. The grave toll on civilian lives and civilian infrastructure has also raised serious concerns under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Explosive remnants of war and unexploded ordnance

Before and post-ceasefire, unexploded ordnance (UXO) has been a major concern, posing severe risks to civilians, especially children who are disproportionately affected as they are less aware and play in areas that might still be contaminated with UXO. Lebanon has been affected by unexploded ordnance (UXO) including cluster munitions from conflicts since 1975. Lebanon was close to meeting its commitments under the Cluster Munitions Convention (CCM) and was planning its strategy to decrease its mine action programme. The recent conflict has pushed these aspirations back possibly decades. Lebanon will be asking for an extension to its commitments under the CCM in 2025 to allow time for an assessment and analysis of the situation. The full survey including the new contamination will not be completed until Q4 2025, but was started once access into the areas of potential contamination was possible.

Eight casualties have been recorded by the Lebanese Mine Action Centre (LMAC) from December 2024 to March 2025, all males who were injured, including a UNIFIL peacekeeper injured in Yater (Nabatiyeh). This is compared to five (all male, 3 killed, 2 injured) in 2024. Approximately 60% of the casualties were caused by tampering with UXO, and approximately 30% were moving debris, the later which is a new phenomenon and one that is a concern for the coming months and years and people rebuild their homes and businesses, with two accidents being reported at debris management sites since access was possible. In addition, UNRWA documented that on 25 December, a 27-year-old Palestine Refugee in Rashidieh Camp brought a UXO into his home. The device detonated, killing him and injuring his two-year-old daughter. The Government of Lebanon manages its mine action programme through the Lebanese Mine Action Centre (LMAC), who coordinate the efforts of four international and three national NGOs along with the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams from the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Since the ceasefire these teams have removed over 250,000 items of UXO.

Impact of the conflict on civilian infrastructure

46 Water facilities damaged impacting nearly 497K residents in Lebanon

4 Schools (included TVET) closed are used as shelters

17 Primary Health Centers and/or dispensaries closed

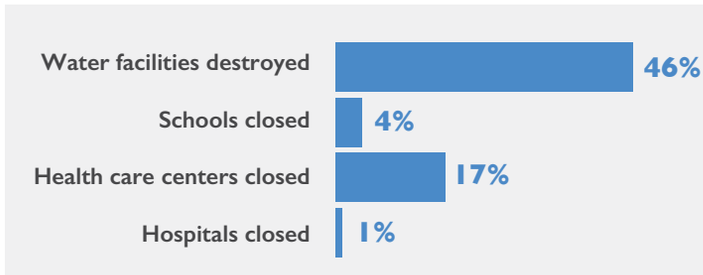
1 Hospital closed

99,000 Housing units partially or fully damaged according to World Bank

2,192 Hectares damaged 8 Oct 2023-16 Jan 2024 according to National Council for Scientific Research

Extensive damage to civilian infrastructure including roads, water, electricity, schools, health centers and municipal buildings has worsened the crisis. According to the Ministry of Health 17 primary healthcare centers and 1 hospital remain closed limiting access to critical healthcare services. The education sector has also been affected, with four schools remaining closed as they are being used as collective shelters for displaced families. Moreover, 46 water facilities have been destroyed, impacting access to clean water affecting nearly 497,000 residents who now face water shortages.[19] Furthermore, 2,192 hectares of agriculture land have been damaged, directly impacting the livelihoods of those depend on farming for income and food security.[20]

Infrastructure damage



Around 45,400 housing units were destroyed, 74,300 partially damaged, and 43,200 suffered light damage

[16] https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/lebanon-reports-israeli-cross-border-incursion-despite-ceasefire/3518092
[17] No group has claimed responsibility and no injuries were reported in Israel.
[18] While the Ministry of Health initially reported the deaths of 7 people, one woman subsequently succumbed to her wounds bringing the death toll to eight.
[19] Lebanon: At a Glance - Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 20 March 2025 [EN/AR] - Lebanon | ReliefWeb
[20] According to the National Council for Scientific Research
[21] https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099030125012526525/pdf/P506380-f58e9761-b29e-4d62-97c3-ebf5a511c4e1.pdf

The World Bank has estimated that 162,900 housing units—approximately 10 percent of Lebanon's pre-conflict housing stock—have been impacted by the conflict, resulting in physical damage estimated at US$4.6 billion. Around 45,400 housing units were destroyed, 74,300 partially damaged, and 43,200 suffered light damage.[21] The Southern and Nabatieh Governorates were the hardest hit, with 18,507 buildings either fully or partially destroyed. Marjaayoun district was the most impacted, with over 27% of its buildings destroyed, followed by Bent Jbeil at almost 15%. The Bekaa and Baalbek-Hermel Governorates also saw significant damage, with hundreds of buildings destroyed. Substantial infrastructure damage was reported in Baalbek, West Bekaa, and Zahle, particularly affecting residential and market areas. Shelter damages included broken windows, doors, and damaged roofs. The total economic loss, including physical damages, is estimated at US$8.5 billion. An assessment revealed that at least 14 schools were destroyed, around 105 were heavily damaged, and nearly 500, which had previously been used as collective shelters, sustained light damage.

Impact on services and gaps in humanitarian assistance

Post-ceasefire, significant gaps remain in essential humanitarian services, including food aid, cash support, hygiene kits, and mental health services, particularly in southern Lebanon, Bekaa and Hermel.[22] Cash assistance is insufficient, leaving many unable to meet their basic needs. The lack of resources following the funding cuts have resulted in gaps in shelter, food, education and healthcare. Many individuals and families are still unable to access adequate shelter, a large number of people living in overcrowded conditions in their own houses or staying with relatives.[23] Local authorities face difficulties providing essential services, such as healthcare, education and waste management. Resources for basic needs, such as food, water, and hygiene supplies, remain scarce, particularly for those most at risk and marginalised, including refugees, migrants, and those with specific needs like the elderly or people with disabilities. With limited livelihood opportunities and ongoing economic strain, many displaced persons face the harsh reality of continuing instability and a lack of support systems to help them rebuild their lives. IDPS and returning IDPs of all nationalities in February reported a lack of health care and medication (20% of respondents), education services, (13%) Protection (13%) , CP (12%) and GBV services (10%).[24]

Environmental damage

Since the conflict began, significant environmental damage has occurred across Lebanon, particularly in the South, Bekaa, and Mount Lebanon. The destruction of forests, woodlands, and agricultural land, exacerbated by the use of white phosphorus and bombardments, has led to severe soil contamination and loss of fertile farmland. Coastal areas south of the Litani River have also been impacted, with warnings issued to fishermen. Agricultural activities, such as olive, grape, and citrus harvesting, were heavily disrupted due to airstrikes, with at least 130 municipalities affected.

Communal tensions and Protection issues for Syrians, refugees of other nationalities and Migrants

Communal tensions

Post-ceasefire, tensions have increased between IDPs both Lebanese, Syrians and migrants and host communities' populations.[25] Disparities among Lebanese households, particularly between those who received assistance to rehabilitate their homes and those that did not, contributed to frustration and tensions.[26] Discriminatory practices have been reported, including that IDPs of all nationalities are charged higher rental fees than local residents for similar accommodation.[27] Refugees and migrants have been particularly affected by these practices and in addition there have been reports of verbal or physical harassment. Rising competition for housing, jobs, and aid has exacerbated social tensions, with local communities expressing frustration over the perceived inequity in resource distribution.

Long standing tensions also continue between Lebanese and Syrian communities. Following the fall of the Assad government, pressure from Lebanese communities for Syrians to return to Syria has increased including on social media.[28] While some authorities have stated that return should be safe and voluntary, other local or national authorities or political actors have called for immediate widespread return, despite the conditions in Syria (see above). Such public pressure for premature returns which are not in line with international standards for the voluntariness of return or cessation of refugee status risk to further fuel anti-refugee rhetoric and restrictive policies and practices (see below).

Following the recent events in Syria, tensions have escalated along the Lebanese-Syrian border, particularly in the Baalbek-Hermel region, as clashes between the Syrian Armed Forces and Lebanese tribal groups intensified in mid-March.[29] The violence posed significant risks to civilians and humanitarian operations, with mortar shells hitting residential areas and disrupting access. Humanitarian organizations suspended activities near the border, restricted staff movement, and engaged with local authorities to assess risks and ensure the safety of operations.

In addition, following the fall of the Assad government in Syria, there were reports of tensions between Sunni communities and newly arrived Shia and Alawite individuals. The new arrivals have largely settled within those of a similar religious or sectarian background, and some participants in Focus Group Discussions reported feeling safe when they live in areas of their own community, particularly those that had preexisting ties with Lebanese who had previously lived in Syrian and who have welcomed the new Syrian arrivals to their community. Given the different profile of those in Lebanon prior to December 9 (predominantly Sunni, as well as other minorities), and those who arrived after the fall of the Assad government in both Bekaa and the North who have been predominantly Shiite and Alawite there are reports of lack of trust and suspicion between these communities, who were perceived to be aligned with different groups within the conflict in Syria (noting that this may or may not have been the case). In addition, in the North, there has been increased resentment among local authorities due to the repercussions of the new influx on strained infrastructure and services and a surge in security concerns and online sectarian rhetoric driven by misinformation and politicization of criminal activities – for instance, the misattribution of an assault in Jebel Mohsen to a sectarian group in mid-March led to spike in online negative Syrian sentiment along sectarian lines.[30]

Tensions related to provision of and access to services were also commonly reported. Among Lebanese, the perception that Syrians receive preferential treatment in terms of services continues to be widespread. While Syrians do have defacto access to many services, including health services, in practice, Syrians report discrimination in how these services are provided – for instance with health services being denied to Syrians or Lebanese being prioritized over Syrians.[31] Some local authorities in the most conflict affected areas stated that while they would like to provide services to both Lebanese and Syrians, where assistance was insufficient, they would prioritize Lebanese. These various tensions, along with political instability and misinformation, threaten social cohesion and stability, highlighting the urgent need for inclusive support and dialogue.[32]

Barriers to legal residency for refugees and migrants

Prior to and following the ceasefire, lack of legal residency continued to have major impact on the safety and security of Syrians and PRS. Latest available figures from the VASyR 2024 indicate that only 18% of Syrians have legal residency and 93% of Syrian families in Lebanon have at least one member in their household lacking legal residency, exposing them to high risks of arrest and deportation, limiting their access to services, education, civil documentation and work opportunities. In May 2024, GSO has halted all residency renewal for PRS. This means that by the end of the year, virtually all of the estimated 27 000 PRS in Lebanon do not have valid legal residency heightening their protection risks. During period of heightened escalation, restrictions on those without legal residency were not heavily enforced by the authorities. After the ceasefire, the North in particular witnessed a return to strict enforcement of restrictions on Syrians without valid legal residencies at checkpoints. This resulted in persons self-restricting their movements, using alternative roads to avoid checkpoints or being arrested at checkpoints. In other areas such as the Bekaa, challenges continued for those lacking legal documentation, particularly when crossing checkpoints, as well as during raids, group arrests and deportations. In the South, previously hosting the highest percentage of those with residency, Syrians witnessed difficulties to obtain new or renew current legal documents and were often met with unexplained delays when processing renewals or having their renewal requests refused altogether. Following the fall of the Assad government in December, Syrians commonly expressed concern concerns of not being able to remain in Lebanon and/or losing access to humanitarian assistance.[33]

[22] https://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/January-2025-Lebanon-Situation-Report.pdf
[23] https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/lebanon-glance-escalation-hostilities-lebanon-06-march-2025-enar
[24] IDP Protection Monitoring Report February 2025 (pending publication)
[25] UNDP December Intra-Lebanese Tension monitoring report
[26] SPEAC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Lebanon, November 2024 – January 2025.
[27] Ibid
[28] Ibid
[29] https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/flash-report-clashes-lebanese-syrian-borders
[30] Document - Lebanon: Inter-Sector Coordination Group Meeting - 4 Apr 2025
[31] SPEAC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Lebanon, November 2024 – January 2025.
[32] For information on communal relations and tensions prior to the escalation in 2024, see here: DataHub Details | TMS
[33] SPEAC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Lebanon, November 2024 – January 2025.

Virtually all estimated 27,000 PRS don't have legal residency

The escalation of conflict in Lebanon further exacerbated protection risks for Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) have who continued to limit restrict their movements due to fear of detention for lacking legal residency. This limitation severely impacted their ability to seek safety, leaving many trapped in conflict-affected areas. This impacted on the ability of families to move to safer areas. During the reporting period, UNRWA became aware of nine cases of PRS detained by the Lebanese General Security Office (GSO). Two individuals were released, while six were deported to Syria. PRS students expressed concern to UNRWA that universities have restricted their enrolment for the academic year due to lack of legal residency. Additionally, PRS continued to face civil registration challenges, particularly in registering new events such as births, deaths, and marriages due to them being tied to legal residency.

For migrants, a significant number were either left by their employers during the escalation and/or have returned to find their livelihood gone. With documentation confiscation being a common practice among employers of migrant workers (including migrant domestic workers), many lack their civil documentation, and are not able to reach their employers after the displacement. As migrants' residency permits are often being linked to a sponsor (employer) under the kafala system, the widespread displacement of migrants, and their subsequent loss of livelihood have further increased the number of migrants facing an irregular status in Lebanon, further exacerbating their vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation. Particularly for female migrant workers the absence of legal residency results in dependency on their employers and increased exposure to exploitation, including sexual exploitation.

Despite these challenges, the authorities did announce measures to facilitate the departure of Syrians with irregular status. On 19 December 2024, the Information Affairs Office of the General Security Office (GSO) issued a statement requesting Syrian national (with irregular residency status who have scheduled flight departures) through Rafic Hariri International Airport between midnight and 8:00 AM to apply to the Settlement Division at least 24 hours prior to departure to resolve any required status issues. In addition, on 19 December 2024, the GSO issued an announcement allowing Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) to leave Lebanon after regularizing their status free of charge. This decision follows UNRWA's advocacy efforts to facilitate the return to Syria of PRS who may have been deterred by the regularization fees.

Deportations, restrictive measures and raids against Syrians

Syrian refugees continue to face risk of forced deportations and report self-restricted movements due to fear of detention at checkpoints. Following the ceasefire there was a significant increase in the measures against Syrians. Deportations increased dramatically immediately following the ceasefire, with almost half of the persons deported for the entire year of 2024 being deported in December. Reported deportations decreased markedly in the first three months of 2025: with an estimated 8% people deported in March 2025 compared to those deported in December 2024. Between 1 December 2024 and the end of March 2025, a total of 58 checkpoint arrest incidents were reported.

Raids: The number of raids in houses fluctuated significantly over the three-month period from December 2024 to February 2025 and were focused only in the Bekaa region, reflecting shifts in security dynamics. In December 2024, raids reached a high level (67), likely due to intensified security operations following the ceasefire and political changes in Syria, with a focus on irregular arrivals and potential security threats. However, in January 2025, the number of raids dropped sharply to just 6, possibly due to cross-border military escalations in Bekaa, leading to a temporary shift in enforcement priorities. By February 2025, raids rose again to 32, suggesting a renewed focus on security measures, potentially in response to increased border movements or concerns over illegal activities associated with the ongoing displacement crisis.

Administrative Measures: The administrative measures have exhibited a clear downward trend over the last months. In December 2024, restrictive measures were notably high at 69, reflecting strict enforcement following the ceasefire and preparations for the return of displaced individuals, including Syrians. The primary focus of these measures was in the North and South, with restrictions mainly targeting rental accommodations in the South and arrests at checkpoints in the North, particularly in response to the collapse of the Assad government and the subsequent influx of Syrians fleeing through Lebanon's northern borders. In January 2025, the number of recorded measures dropped by nearly 50% to 35, with enforcement continuing to focus on checkpoint arrests in the North and rental restrictions and curfews in the South. By February 2025, the number declined even further to just 7, marking a significant 80% decrease compared to the previous month. This sharp decline suggests that the measures were scaled back, likely due to shifts in Syria's political landscape and the possibility of Syrians to return to their country of origin without fear of persecution or security threats.

Returns to Syria

With the fall of the Assad government in Syria in December, many Syrian refugees in Lebanon expressed both hope and uncertainty about the possibility of returning to Syria as the situation in Syria remains complex and uncertain. In December, there was an increase in movements to Syria from Lebanon, with many of these initial movements involving crossing of unofficial border crossing to assess shelter conditions, locate missing family members, or secure urgent necessities like medication. While risks related to persecution by the former Government have ceased, other risks may persist or even become more pronounced. Given the volatile and evolving security dynamics in Syria, UNHCR continues calling on States to allow civilians fleeing Syria access to their territories, to ensure respect for the principle of non-refoulement at all times, and not to forcibly return of Syrian nationals and former habitual residents of Syria, including Palestinians previously residing in Syria, to any part of Syria – see UNHCR 2025 updated position on return to Syria. In January 2024, a UNHCR[34] survey found that 24% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon expressed an intention to return to Syria within 12 months, a marked increase from only 1.2% in July 2024. 55% expressed no intention to return to Syria within 12 months, while 21% were undecided about return in the next 12 months. In February 2024, an UNRWA survey found that 13% of PRS expressed intention to return to Syria within 12 months with only 36% of those surveyed feeling that they had sufficient information to decide whether to return. Key barriers to return included lack of shelter, livelihoods and services as well as safety and security concerns. Some of those who traveled to Syria in December and January eventually returned to Lebanon, due to the high cost.[35] UNHCR has deactivated 97,021 Syrians known to UNHCR who are presumed to have returned to Syria there as of 31 March 2025.[36] Initial reports suggest those who arrived after the fall of Assad government, particularly those who experienced,[37] are less likely to be willing to return than many of those who fled to Lebanon during the Assads government rule. Given the fluidity and uncertainty of the situation in Syria both the intentions and ability of Syrian refugees to return to Syria will continue to evolve.

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For migrants, evacuation and voluntary humanitarian return started in October and continued through to December 2024 by Embassies, Consulates, IOM and community networks and civil society. 4,868 migrants approached IOM seeking return assistance from October to December - several thousand were able to return to their country of origin including 504 returned with IOMs support from December 2024 -March 2025. Following the ceasefire, around 20% of those seeking return assistance changed their minds following the ceasefire. While the number of requests for return have reduced following the ceasefire, there are still a large number of migrants seeking assistance return, and the number is still much higher than the capacity following funding cuts.

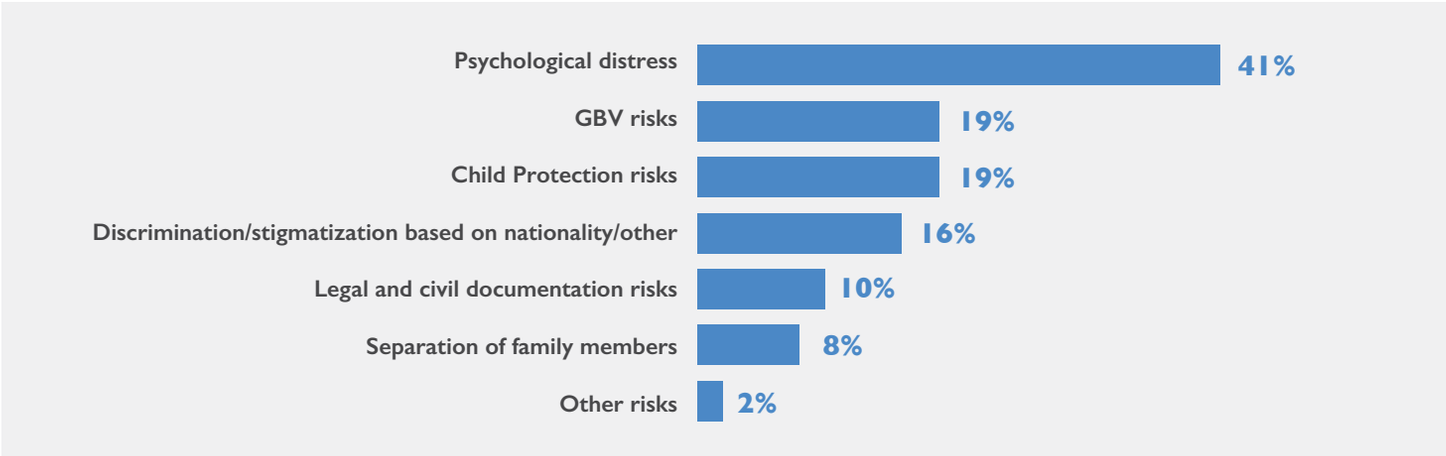
Several thousand migrants were able to return to their country of origin including over 500 supported by IOM

[34] https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/114221
[35] SPEAC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Lebanon, November 2024 – January 2025.
[36] UNHCR, Lebanon Syrian returns & movements snapshot, 31 March 2025
[37] Ibid

Increased crime, violence, exploitation and psychosocial distress

All populations reported a wide range of protection issues including violence, exploitation and psychological distress during this period. Among IDPs and returning IDPs, the most reported protection risks were psychosocial distress, GBV and child protection risks, discrimination or stigmatization based on nationality (particularly for non-Lebanese), issues related to legal status or other forms of documentation and separation from family members.[38]

Main protection risks for the IDPs



General safety concerns

Concerns about safety and security were among the most reported protection risks across all populations, with theft and looting being reported as the most frequently reported concern (reported by 22% of Key Informant Interviews) particularly in January. 64% of these cases occurred in North Lebanon and Akkar governorates, areas which have previously reported widespread poverty and high crime rates. Psychological and emotional abuse were also common concerns, which were highest in the South among PRL, followed by Lebanese and Syrians.[39]

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

GBV risks have been exacerbated by war and displaced, particularly in southern border areas as well as other conflict affected areas such as Bekaa and Baalbek El Hermel. GBV partners reported increased intimate partner violence, significant increase in GBV risks in collective sites and increased harmful practices such as child marriage and child labour exposing children to sexual assault and other forms of GBV. Women and girls faced heightened risks of sexual exploitation and assault including by relatives or strangers in overcrowded collective shelters or shared accommodation lacking basic privacy or segregated wash facilities. Syrians, migrants and other population groups faced restricted and unequal access to shelter due to nationality or perceived affiliations, forcing them to sleep outdoors or in inadequate shelter types overcrowded. Life-saving services were highly impacted and damaged, including GBV and Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) services with several facilities (26% of the facilities providing CMR services were affected) being closed and only recently reconstructed or reopened. This has significantly impact women and girls' access to services and disclosure of GBV. The significantly reduced access to GBV services was also reflected in the 2024 GBV IMS report indicating a reduction of reported incidents of 38% between Q3 and Q4 of 2024.[40]

Post-ceasefire disclosures of GBV in collective sites as well as in shared homes and during domestic or agricultural labour have been observed across the country. Female headed households, children and adults with disability have faced disproportionate exposure and access challenges during and post ceasefire. Limitations of reporting GBV to law enforcement actors persist due to fears of stigma and retaliation, limited judicial resources and lack of trust in the relevant national authorities. Women and girls safe spaces and case management coupled with MHPSS services and access to SRHR are critical needs post-ceasefire. Moreover, the newly arrived and displaced women and girls are in high need of dignity kits and personal care items that help maintain their dignity, health, safety, and mobility when accessing basic services.

A significant rise in technology-facilitated GBV (TFGBV) was observed in the GBV Safety Audit conducted between July and November 2024, including cyber harassment and online grooming, particularly in South and BML, highlighting the need for digital literacy and legal protection.[41] Negative coping mechanisms including, adolescent girls being forced to marry early as an economic survival strategy within their communities and increased anxiety and stress among women and girls due to challenges related to access to GBV services, primarily legal and MHPSS services, restriction on movements, volatile and unpredictable security, and presence of armed forces.

Child Protection

Children's protection has been severely negatively affected by the long months of war, displacement, destruction of houses and homes as well as loss of and separation from close family members. Interruption of daily routines, being accommodated in overcrowded housing without privacy and lack of access to child-friendly spaces and education have added to distress and feelings of fear and instability widely reported by child protection actors. Gender-based violence was widely reported against children including as described above child marriage, as well as psychological and emotional abuse.[42] Continued displacement, inflation and slow rehabilitation efforts have increased the economic vulnerability of families, which contributed to an increase in both child marriage and child labour. Widespread psychosocial distress (see below) and in increase of substance abuse among girls and boys were also reported during this period by child protection actors.

The lack of education is another key driver of child protection risks. The escalation in conflict had a severe impact on access to education for all children, specifically Syrian and Palestinian refugee children, and children of migrants and refugees of other nationalities. The postponement of the 2024-25 academic year disrupted their right to education and further exacerbated the vulnerabilities of these children, many of whom already encounter difficulties face challenges enrolling with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) due to requirements related to residency. In addition, displacement due to conflict also disrupted learning, as the frequent movement relocations of families, and access to stable internet and laptops/smart phones made it difficult for children to consistently engage with their remote education.

Access to birth registration is a crucial protection mechanism for all children – the ceasefire and return of large numbers of IDPs to their cadasters of origin made access to birth registration significantly easier than in the previous 2 months. In addition, on 03 February 2025, the Director General of the Personal Status Department (PSD) issued a circular that extended the application of the waiver for registration of birth and death - allowing Syrian children born between October 2023 and March 2025 to be registered at the PSD Nofous level without requiring a court decision, even if the standard one-year registration deadline has passed. This waiver is important for all Syrians and is particularly important for families planning to return to Syria to ensure that they have evidence of the identify of children born during this period in Lebanon.

[38] IDP Protection Monitoring Report, February 2025 (pending publication)
[39] Ibid
[40] GBV Safety Audit 2024, Lebanon, GBV Working Group
[41] Ibid
[42] IDP Protection Monitoring Report, February 2025 (pending publication)

Evictions and Housing Land and Property

The conflict in Lebanon has worsened housing insecurity, exposing refugees, migrants and vulnerable communities to abuse and exploitation. Destruction and damage to large number of houses and displacement resulted in increase in rental prices during the conflict and continued in some areas following the ceasefire, particularly in areas of returning IDPs[43] where rental costs exponentially increased, doubled and sometimes increased threefold. Many displaced individuals lost their legal documents due to bombings and displacement, making it more difficult to prove homeownership, renew rental agreements, or access aid. Some landlords and property owners took advantage of this legal limbo, inflating rents, enforcing arbitrary evictions, and exploiting undocumented tenants. For returning IDPs, especially migrants, refugees of other nationalities and others renting privately, some returned to find their former homes were looted, damaged and/or facing unpaid rental costs for the months they had been displaced.[44] For returning IDPs without legal residency, their ability to negotiate was limited, and the fear of further increase in rent or even eviction. This disproportionally affected the poorest Lebanese, Syrians, migrants and refugees of other nationalities, resulting in evictions or threats of evictions, overcrowding or forcing families to relocate to cheaper, often inadequate housing. Reports of landlords prioritising renting to Lebanese were widespread, creating additional challenges for non-Lebanese to find decent shelter. Syrians and migrants without legal status were particularly at risk of exploitation, difficulties to pay rent and eviction, as were women-headed households and persons with disabilities of all nationalities.[45] Housing insecurity and fear of eviction among IDPs and returning IDPs was most pronounced in the South, BML, and the Bekaa leaving IDPs and the returning IDPs trapped in a cycle of instability and uncertainty.[46]

Labour Exploitation

Economic exploitation continued to be widely reported during this period. Informal and exploitative labour, while impacting all populations, disproportionally affects Syrians, Palestinians and other refugees without legal status as well as migrants. Syrians continue to report receiving lower rates for labour than Lebanese and having little recourse in the case of lack of payment or underpayment.[47] Requirements for labour in the conflict affected areas, particularly the South, meant that some Syrians returned to the South for work despite continuing bans by municipalities on return. New Syrian arrivals in the South following the fall of the Assad government reported similar widespread economic exploitation. Increased economic hardship has pushed many, including men, women and children, into precarious, exploitative employment, increasing their vulnerability. High unemployment rates and rising inflation exacerbate the situation.

Migrants continue to face specific protection risks related to employment stemming from the Kafala system. During the months of escalation Embassies, Consulates and humanitarian organizations and interest groups reported migrant domestic workers being left behind during displacement by their employers, often without their own documentation. Partners note difficulties in supporting them regularizing their status and/or recuperating their documents, especially when employers have left the country, or are irresponsive. For the migrants, both domestic workers and other migrant workers, the lack of livelihood due to the displacement – often in combination with a loss of documentation and sponsorship/legal status also leaves them highly vulnerable to labour exploitation.

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disability have been disproportionately affected by war, displacement and destruction of houses property and the number of people facing disabilities as a direct result of the hostilities has also increased. During the war, persons with disabilities faced challenges in accessing information, in reporting abuse or violence or sharing needs for evacuation from high risk or hard-to-reach areas. Post-ceasefire, Organizations working for Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) highlighted exposure to violence, including sexual violence of children and adults with disability during the war. Often their exposure remained unrecognized or not reported for fear of further retaliation, including by service providers in charge of collective sites as well as lack of awareness on their rights including best interests' considerations. In the aftermath of the war, those concerns are being disclosed by those living with disability, parents or caregivers. Needs to enhance inclusive communication with communities through mechanisms accessible to persons with specific needs and enhanced accessibility to public schools used as shelters have come up as a critical need in this period and a key preparedness action in case of reescalation of the conflict.

Psychosocial distress and mental illness

Psychological distress has been prevalent among all affected populations including driven by violence, displacement, and the impacts of war. The ceasefire and ability for some to return to their homes in Lebanon, together with the possibility of return to Syria and the new Lebanese government offered signs of hope and a welcome respite during this period for many. None-the-less as described above the ongoing impacts of the escalation and the uncertain security, socio-economic and political situation in the region resulted in persistent psychosocial distress and mental health issues for all segments of the affected population. For those returning to conflict affected areas in Bekaa, Beirut and the South, across populations, the uncertainty that comes with the continues ceasefire violations and the potential of facing renewed displacement is an additional stressor. Key issues identified included:

- Mental health issues such as panic attacks and substance addition were reported, underscoring the urgent need for psychosocial support.
- IDPs and returning IDPs, both Syrians and Lebanese have also shown signs of psychological distress. Across 175 KIIs conducted in February 2025, psychosocial distress was the most reported protection risks by 41% of respondents while 27% indicated that IDPs need mental health and psychosocial support.[48]
- Children's mental health has been severely impacted with 38% of households reporting anxiety and 24% reporting depression among children.[49]
- Some Syrian refugees also reported reduced stress due to political changes in Syria while the fear of renewed conflict and uncertainty was widespread across all Syrian groups. In the South, discrimination and administrative measures caused significant distress for Syrian refugees.[50]
- Children experience sleep difficulties, social isolation, and aggressive behavior. Caregivers psychosocial distress impacted their ability to care for and support their children. Children also suffer from psychological distress due to bullying from host communities, overcrowding and stressful living conditions. Mental health conditions among children including anxiety, PTSD and depression have increased.[51]
- In the case of migrants, partners and community leaders are also describing an increase in severe mental health cases requiring specialized services, as well as an urgent need for psychosocial counselling for the many migrant community leaders who were, and continue to be, at the frontlines of the response, often while themselves facing prolonged displacement or still hosting displaced community members. Migrants IDPs returning to the South, whether required to do so by their employers, or due to lack of shelter and livelihood options elsewhere, report similar symptoms.
- Despite these challenges, as per the KIIs with IDPs conducted in the North, only 15% were aware of available mental health services, with awareness especially low among the 85% living outside collective shelters.
- High levels of psychosocial distress were reported among Syrian new arrivals, particularly those that fled and/or experienced violence during the flight to Lebanon.[52] Yet access to PSS services among Syrian newcomers continues to be insufficient. This is due to several factors including a lack of community familiarity with PSS activities, prioritization of basic needs, and a lack of available services.

Psychosocial distress was the most reported protection risks by 41% of respondents

[43] Ibid
[44] IDP Protection Monitoring Report February 2025 (pending publication)
[45] SPEAC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Lebanon, November 2024 – January 2025.
[46] IDP Protection Monitoring Report February 2025 (pending publication)
[47] Q4 Syrian protection Monitoring report, UNHCR and SPEAC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Lebanon, November 2024 – January 2025.
[48] IDP Protection Monitoring Report February 2025 (pending publication)
[49] Child Focused Rapid Assessment, UNICEF, 2025
[50] Ibid
[51] SPEAC Quarterly Protection Monitoring Report Lebanon, November 2024 – January 2025.
[52] North Protection monitoring reports

More information on protection situation

More information on the protection situation from December 2024 – March 2024 is available below:

Syrian PM Q4
IDP protection monitoring reports
Cross population PM report Nov 24-Jan 25
Tension Monitoring
Syrian refugee return survey
North protection monitoring reports

Protection response

During the Emergency, the Protection Sector developed a list of prioritized activities across Protection, CP and GBV partners.[53] Priorities included life-saving case management services, cash for protection purposes, information and awareness on access to services including in collective shelters, community-level outreach and information dissemination as well specialized services for persons with disability and older persons as well as support to the increased psychosocial support needs. At sectoral level, protection monitoring to identify protection risks and trends across sectors as well as upscaling of the coordination of the sector at national and subnational level was also prioritized.

The protection sector including child protection and GBV continued to provide key protection interventions to all affected populations following the ceasefire including community-based protection initiatives, as well as protection response services such as protection cash and case management and specialized support to persons with disabilities. Given the rapid population movements within Lebanon as well and cross-border movements to and from Syria following the fall of the Assad government, the sector has prioritized the most affected geographical regions – in particular scaling up programming in the most conflict affected areas, which also had large numbers of returning IDPs, in the South and Nabatieh, Bekaa and Southern suburbs of Lebanon and refocusing on protection programming in the community as most collective sites rapidly closed. The protection programming developed for the emergency response[54] was adapted with an increased focus on information about and referral to available services and rights, Psychosocial support, Mine Risk Awareness, and partnership with and support to local CBOS and NGOs who had remained in these conflict affected areas when they were not accessible to other organisations during the escalation of hostilities.

15,000 received information and dignity kits from GBV partners

In mid-December, as approximately 90,000 new arrivals rapidly entered Lebanon to Bekaa and Hermel following the fall of the Assad government, protection partners mobilized to provide protection programming in the collective sites and communities. However, due to access issues, lack of funding and limited capacity of protection partners particularly in Hermel the needs continued to exceed available protection services – for instance, of the 263 informal collective sites assessed only 9 per cent were regularly receiving specialised protection services, while only 27 per cent had a safe space for disclosure by end March.[55] In the North, protection partners were able to mobilise to respond to new influx after the escalation of conflict on the Syria coast on March 6 based on existing geographical division of responsibilities among partners and capacity for protection monitoring but significant gaps remain due to lack of funding and lack of space in collective sites and surrounding villages for protection programming.[56]

From early 2025, protection partners began preparing to support Syrians considering return to Syria. This included provision of information and counselling to ensure that decision to return to Syria is informed and voluntary – for instance through the development and dissemination of a dedicated UNHCR Help page with information on return. UNHCR also worked closely with the Lebanese authorities to agree to a plan to support return through go and see visits for Syrians to assess the situation in Syria, financial and other support self-organized return, and government-organized returns.

During this period, the significant population movements, and the resulting changes in protection risks mean that protection monitoring was critical to enable protection programming to be adjusted promptly. Monitoring, analysis and risk mitigation were key as the situation continued to evolve to allow the humanitarian community to undertake evidence-based advocacy and adjust programming to mitigate protection risks. During this period, protection actors developed an interagency protection advocacy strategy. Key priorities include advocacy on key policy reforms on access to legal residency and civil registration, supporting communities to engage in local community led advocacy with authorities and other stakeholders, and advocacy with donors to sustain funding to critical protection including child protection and GBV programming. Another key area that was scaled up in this period was explosive ordnance risk education (EORE). Once civilians started moving home, the mine action sector has delivered a significant number of EORE activities, including the distribution of over 1.5 million leaflets at roadside check points, roadside billboards and media campaigns. The mine action sector is supported by UNDP and UNICEF and coordinated through the Social Stability Sector.

Child protection actors have been providing a range of child protection services during this period, including information and awareness raising on child protection risks and services, psychosocial support to children and caregivers including the in the South and in collective centers, child protection case management and border monitoring including to prevent and address separation. Child protection actors have been active at border crossings with Syria to prevent family separations, distributing identification bracelets and facilitating family reunifications, with 89 out of 54 identified unaccompanied children reunited with their families by end March.

Gender-based Violence coordination and response was scaled up during the escalation and following the ceasefire in the different field locations. During this period, the GBV Working Group published a GBV Safety Audit on risks, response challenges and strengthened guidance on programmatic adaptation and advocacy actions, based on data collected from July – November 2024. The Safety Audit highlighted the increased levels of violence within families, significant GBV risks in IDP shelters as well as the disproportionate exposure to GBV of groups marginalized based on their nationality, legal and social status, gender or belonging to specific social groups. Key recommendations to strengthen GBV risk mitigation across the response of all sectors. Following the ceasefire, GBV actors focused on re-establishing offices and safe spaces to strengthen access of GBV survivors to GBV case management, psychosocial support and prevention services. Partners conducted outreach to communities to provide information on services and dignity kits to over 15,000 women and girls of reproductive age. An updated Guidance Note on Dignity Kits was developed, outlining the items in the kit and how to link distribution of dignity kits to information and access to services. As many partner centers and safe spaces have been damaged and affected by the conflict, after the ceasefire, guidance was also developed to harmonize the activities and strategies to implement Women and Girls Safe Spaces across partners in Lebanon. In addition, a GBV WG mapping of safe spaces was conducted to identify existing GBV support structures, gaps in serve provision as well as potential synergies with other existing static and mobile protection structures and services (e.g. Community Centers, Social Development Centers).

While the protection response was overall well-funded in 2024[57] – with the Protection Sector funded at 70% - the freezing of funding by the US authorities in late January 2025 had a significant impact on the ability of protection partners to respond to the multiple, complex, evolving protection needs of the different populations outlined above. In 2024, US funding was approximately 20% of the sector, going up to approximately 40% for general protection. As a result of the projected significant reduction of funding for protection programming in 2025, the protection sector is developing prioritization guidelines to support partners to geographically and programmatically ensure that core protection programming is available for the most vulnerable within the community, including displaced Syrians with disability, older persons, woman-headed households and people at risk of physical and legal protection concerns including being exposed to physical, emotional or sexual violence. The guidance outlines core protection activities to support the most at risk, priority geographical regions and how to adapt protection interventions to address the needs different population groups, including refugee groups and new arrivals, internally displaced persons and migrants. This will ensure a harmonized approach by protection actors to targeting, streamlining implementation methodologies and strengthening cross-sectoral synergies while ensuring access to critical protection services for the different population groups affected.

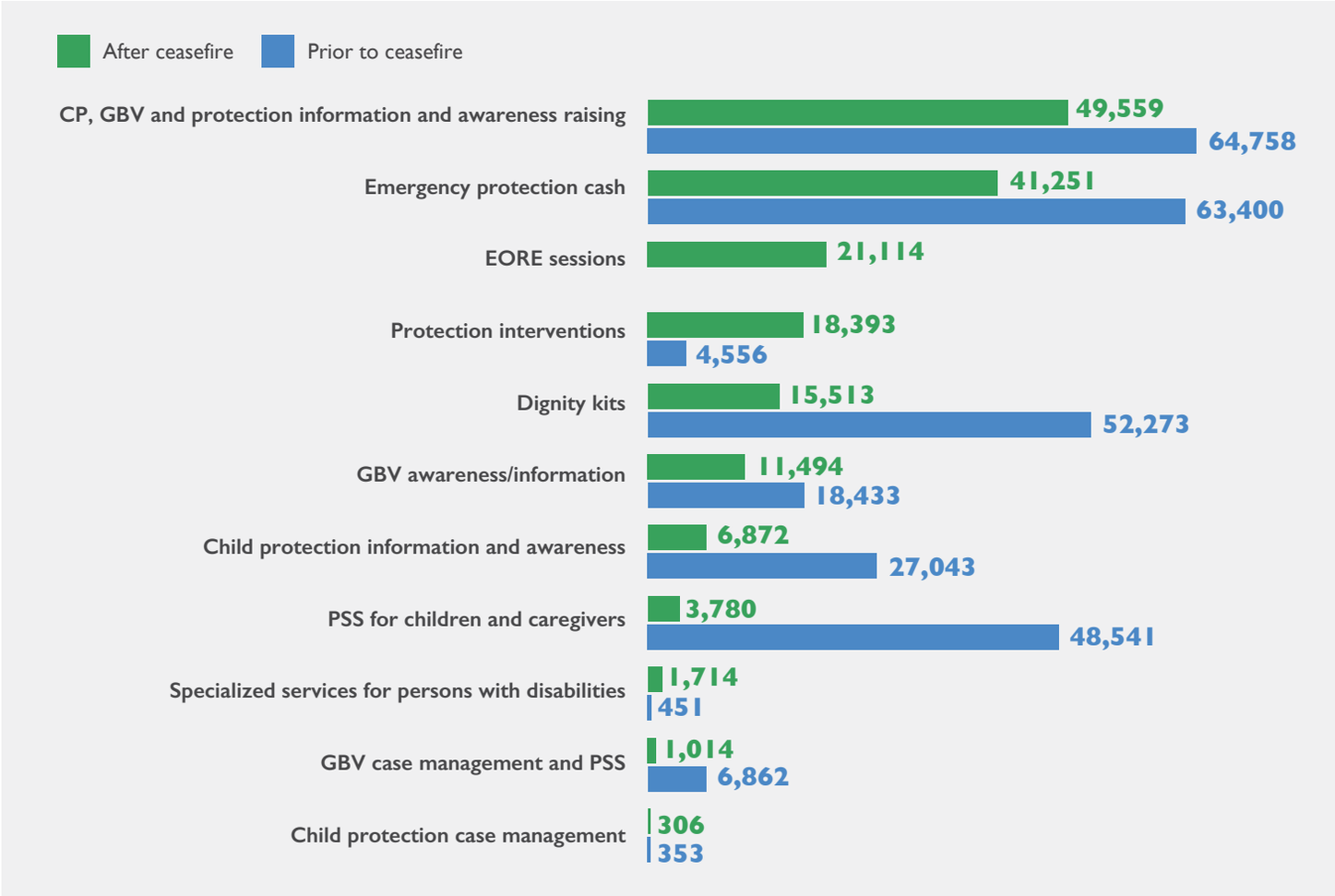
[53] Protection, Child Protection and GBV Emergency Guidance on protection response in and outside collective shelters
[54] Available here: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y0U0XIB21FKrSZNPT9bOYE_1-2oegohq
[55] MSNA Cross Border - Power BI
[56] Document - Lebanon: Inter-Sector Coordination Group Meeting - 4 Apr 2025
[57] Document - Lebanon Response Plan: Protection Sector Dashboard - End of Year 2024

Results

During this period, over 30 protection partners, 40 child protection partners and 47 GBV partners provided protection services throughout the county. Details of the number of people reached from during the escalation and after the ceasefire for the various child protection, GBV and protection activities are listed below. This demonstrates the ability of protection partners to continue to provide key protection services both prior to and after the ceasefire. It also demonstrates the ability of protection partners to adapt programming, scaling up services such as explosive ordnance risk education and protection interventions, following the ceasefire.

30 protection partners,
40 child protection partners
47 GBV partners

Key needs



Sustained investment in protection programming is required to prevent mitigate and respond to the range of protection risks outlined above. This includes three priorities:

1. Sustaining a core package of protection programming for the most vulnerable, with a focus on the most affected areas
2. Supporting emergency protection response to the new arrivals from Syria
3. Providing protection interventions to support the voluntary return of Syrians to Syria

If additional funding is not made available to the protection sector, it is projected that the sector will have between 30-35% less funding available in 2025 than 2024. As such, prioritization of available funding to support the most vulnerable and advocacy for additional funding must be undertaken in parallel by the sector. While following the ceasefire some protection interventions have been sustained or scaled up, there are gaps in the provision of other services.

Protection interventions to be sustained	**Protection interventions to be scaled up**
Child Protection, GBV and protection information provision	**PSS for children and caregivers**
Emergency protection cash (as part of case management	**Specialised services for persons with disabilities**
Explosive ordorance risk education sessions	**GBV, child protection and protection case management**
Protection interventions	**Legal aid services**
Dignity kits	**Counselling and information on return**
Protection monitoring	**Protection advocacy and mainstreaming**

For more information contact Protection Sector Coordinators below.

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