

As the crisis in Syria enters its seventh year, Syrian refugees continue to face eviction notices for a variety of reasons. This In Focus report looks at the impact of evictions on refugees and host communities, as well as how humanitarian actors are responding to incidents. It profiles three particularly large-scale evictions that have occurred over the last year in the Bekaa and North Governorates. Other, smaller-scale evictions continue to occur regularly throughout Lebanon.

## RATIONALES

Evictions are commonly carried out for one or more of the following reasons:

- Safety and security
- Environment and sanitation (public health)
- Competition over public resources
- Failure to pay rent and other disputes with landlords
- Desire by landlord to use land for alternative purposes

In accordance with international and national legal standards, evictions can only be justified in the most exceptional circumstances, when no feasible alternatives exist, and they must be conducted in a lawful, reasonable and proportional manner.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT

### ON REFUGEES

- Difficulty identifying secure alternative accommodation
- Limited or no access to basic services in relocation sites
- Financial and material loss (e.g. advanced rent paid and shelter improvements)
- Exploitation by potential landlords and shawish
- Risk of further relocation if municipal approval is not secured at destination
- Cut-off from livelihood opportunities
- Disrupted schooling

### ON HOST COMMUNITIES

- Increase in the number of informal settlements elsewhere
- Weakening or fragmentation of communities, and increased segregation between refugee and host communities
- Creation of social tensions and problems for other municipalities

### ON THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

- Duplication of humanitarian interventions in water, shelter, etc.
- Financial loss in humanitarian project implementation

## HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Evictions should be the last resort, when all other options have been explored. The operational response must be carefully coordinated, so that engagement is carried out with the right balance between the rights and humanitarian needs of affected populations and the legal justification underlying the eviction. The response will focus on:



Due to operational constraints, UNHCR and partners are at times required to prioritize the response to the most vulnerable, especially in large eviction situations.

### Incident: Minnieh, North Governorate, Jul-Nov 2016

#### RATIONALE

- Security-related grounds; proximity to within 1km of LAF facilities and supply routes.

#### POPULATION AFFECTED

- 578 households (HHs) (approx. 2,923 persons) evicted. Majority of HHs moved with their belongings.

#### RESPONSE

- Advocacy with LAF resulting in extension of eviction deadline, and with municipalities on relocation sites for refugees.
- Tracking of population movements, particularly secondary relocation.
- Provision, in transit and relocation sites, of shelter kits, WASH assistance, mobile medical units, referral for emergency cash and food parcels (for extremely vulnerable); follow-up for persons with specific needs.

### Incident: Akkar, North Governorate, Feb 2017

#### RATIONALE

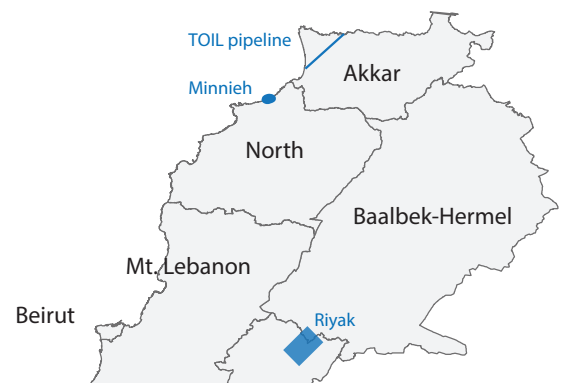
- Health and safety risks; proximity to Tripoli Oil Installations (TOIL) pipeline; follows eviction of 1,243 HHs in 2015.

#### POPULATION AFFECTED

- 220 HHs (1,336 persons) handed eviction notice. 91 per cent evicted by end March.

#### RESPONSE

- Advocacy with TOIL and LAF to extend eviction notice period and clarify distance to be maintained from the pipeline.
- Provision of basic assistance to relocation sites including 75 shelter kits, 22 latrines, 14 water tanks, 176 hygiene kits, 109 baby kits, 167 CRI kits and 176 jerry cans.
- Protection monitoring: protection counselling sessions to 90 refugees and facilitation of 33 lease agreements.



### Incident: Riyak Bekaa, ongoing since March 2017

#### RATIONALE

- Security-related grounds; due to location within an area of 6x9km around Riyak airbase.

#### POPULATION AFFECTED

- 2,160 HHs (approx. 12,665 persons) handed eviction orders; 58 per cent evicted by 23 May. LAF has not yet enforced evictions, but has progressively introduced eviction deadlines. There is a continued need for approved relocation sites.

#### RESPONSE

- Advocacy with LAF to give refugees adequate time to find alternative accommodation, and with neighbouring municipalities to accept relocating refugees.
- Assessment of needs and intentions of evictees; tracking of movements to provide basic assistance to new sites; eviction response tools and GIS mapping.
- Provision of assistance to most vulnerable, including shelter kits for 454 households and WASH interventions for 330 households; protection interventions for 1,053 individuals referred for legal or specialized counselling.