

Protection Monitoring Findings

Lebanon – 1st quarter 2022



UNHCR conducts protection monitoring with partners on an ongoing basis to analyse trends in the protection environment and risks facing refugees. UNHCR’s protection monitoring partners Intersos and SHEILD conduct interviews with refugee households to elicit their feedback on the overall protection environment in Lebanon and the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. The sampling of households and findings presented are representative both at the regional and at the national level. In addition, partners conduct a number of interviews with key informants of different profiles to complement the quantitative analysis from the household interviews. When needs for specific services, assistance or information are identified during interviews, UNHCR’s protection monitoring partners refer the individuals concerned accordingly. Information on COVID-19 is systematically provided during each call, and persons needing help to register for vaccination are referred for assistance.

This report provides a summary of the protection monitoring findings from all regions of Lebanon in the 1st quarter (January to March) of 2022.¹ The feedback from refugees is used to inform UNHCR’s advocacy, and programmatic interventions with the aim of improving refugees’ access to protection and essential services, assistance and information.

Key numbers January to March 2022



6,524
refugee households interviewed



98%
of households are Syrian, **1%** Iraqi and **1%** other nationalities



8%
youth (16-25 yrs)



42% women respondents & **14%** female-headed households



4%
older persons (60+yrs)



5%
persons with disabilities



127
key informants consulted



1,218
household referrals made

Implementing partners



SHEILD
—ASSOCIATION—



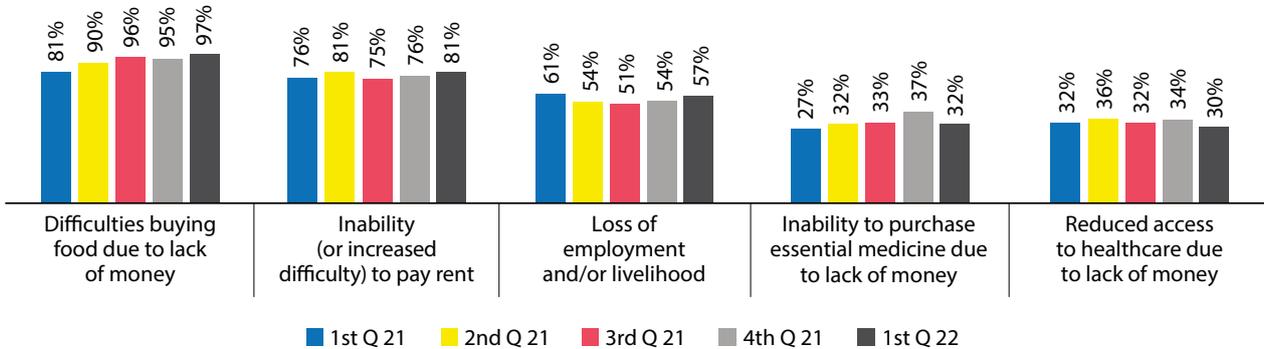
INTERSOS

¹ Numbers and percentages presented are for the quarter (January–March 2022) unless otherwise specified.

Impact of the socio-economic situation

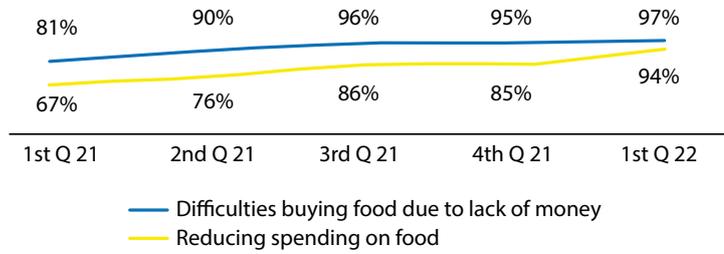
- Lebanon's deepening crises have continued to intensify refugees' struggle to meet their basic needs. Already serious gaps in food, housing and livelihoods have grown, while healthcare barriers remain significant.

Most widely experienced impacts of the socio-economic situation



- The number of refugees reporting difficulty affording food has continued to increase. In particular, there was a significant rise in refugees reporting reducing spending on food and as a result, nearly every refugee is facing food insecurity.

Key food related impacts



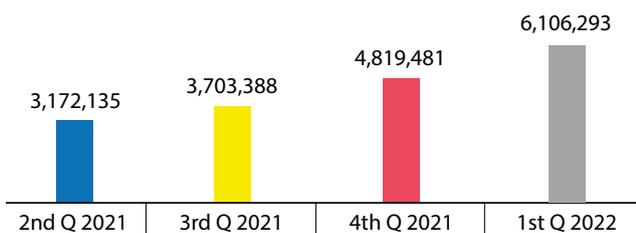
Families are going into debts to provide food for their children, they cannot afford paying high rent fees.

- Key informant interview: Syrian refugee in Aabra Saida, February 2022

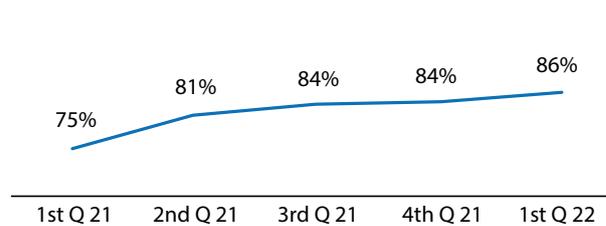
- Refugees have also had to take on debt at rising levels to meet their basic needs. During the quarter, a record high number of refugees (72%) said they took on debt to pay for basic necessities, while 60% bought food on credit. Overall, 86% of refugee households resorted to one of these forms of borrowing this quarter, which is another record high rate.

- Household debt has increased 98% since we began tracking this data in May of last year.

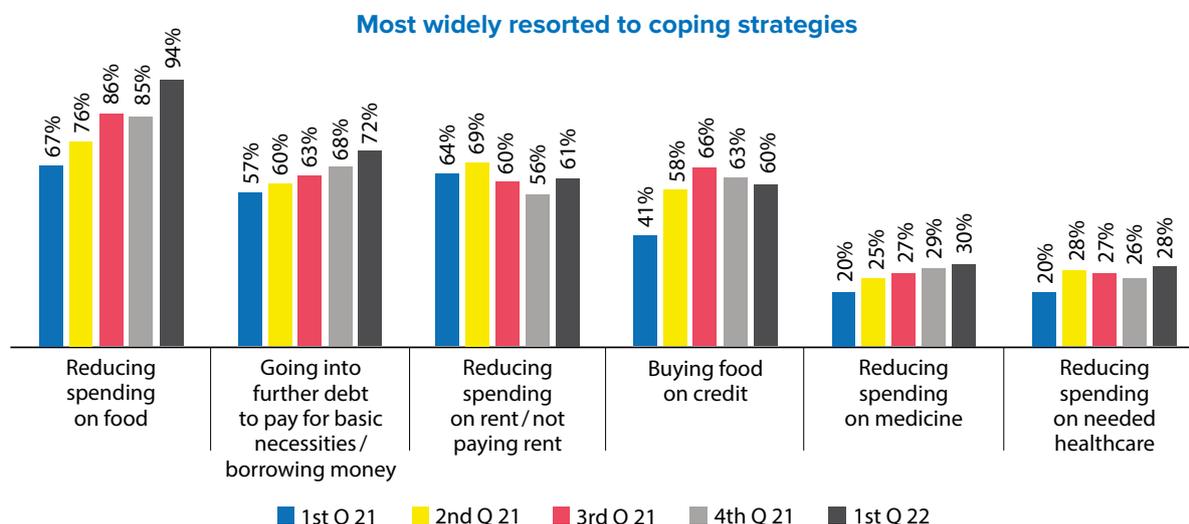
Average refugee household debt (LBP)



Household resorting to at least one form of borrowing



- Refugees' ability to rely on debt as a coping mechanism to avoid hunger and homelessness is likely not sustainable. Since the first quarter of 2021 an average of 55% of households have reported losing pay and work. Given that already limited livelihoods are diminishing while debt continues rising beyond the ability of refugees to repay (the average refugee household income was just 517,564 LBP according to the 2021 VASyR), it is highly likely that refugees in the near future will be unable to rely on accessing credit.
- In addition to reducing spending on food and increased debt coping strategies, reduced spending on medicine and healthcare were reported at their highest recorded rates.



When I find one pack of medicine, I give my child less pills than what is prescribed to let the medicine last longer.

- Syrian refugee in the Habbouch, February 2022

- Key informants highlight that many families are being forced to forgo needed healthcare and prioritize household members with the most pressing needs. This quarter, 40% of persons needing healthcare reported being unable to access it. A lack of money was the reason why 94% of them could not get care, while the service being unavailable due to a lack of capacity or resources was the reason why the remaining 6% could not access care.
- This quarter UNHCR began to track data on transport and electricity to substantiate widespread reports of issues in these areas.
- A lack of electricity is causing significant hardships for struggling refugee families. 24% of refugee households have less than two hours of electricity a day, and over half of all households (54%) are unable to meet their basic household needs because of a lack of electricity.
- Key informants highlight several significant impacts resulting from a lack of electricity. In particular, many key informants report lack of electricity has meant that refugees have less access to safe drinking water as both individual and local water systems are not able to operate at the required level. In addition, refugees have had to change their food coping strategies to avoid foods that require refrigeration.



Now, we are obliged to burn plastic materials, and old shoes to stay warm, which is leading to disputes with neighbours due to the toxic bad smell.

- Syrian refugee in Hasbaya, February 2022

- Many key informants also highlight that refugees are resorting to extremely harmful coping mechanisms, such as burning garbage for heat and cutting trees from private land, and that these practices are leading to increased tensions in the communities where refugees live.
- Unfortunately, this situation is set to worsen. 76% of households report being unable to afford their current electricity expenses, and many key informants highlight that they will be forced to discontinue generator payments in the coming months.
- Rising costs of transportation have meant that over a third of refugee households (34%), were unable to reach a needed services in the last 30 days. These services include healthcare (32%), groceries (21%), work (20%), humanitarian assistance (9%) and school (6%).
- Key informants have also highlighted that rising transportation costs have caused more children to walk to and from school, and that this has exposed children to increased incidents of verbal and physical harassment, as well as generally exposing them to danger, particularly when walking at night without streetlights.
- Mental health issues continued to be reported by approximately a quarter of households, with 23% of adults reporting mental health issues, and 5% of households with children reporting mental health issues amongst children.

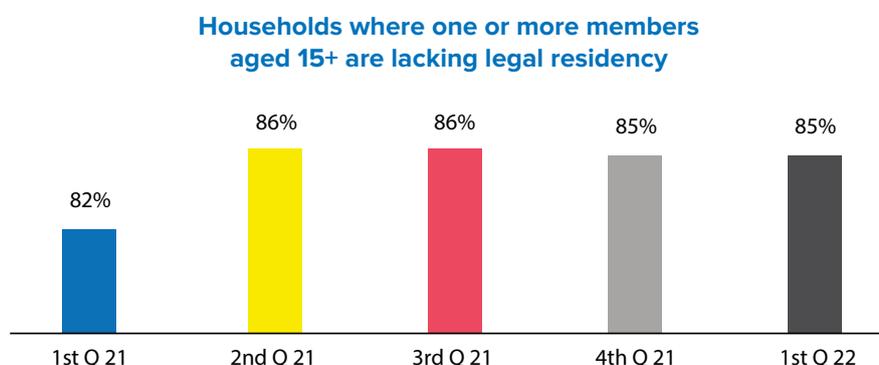
Legal residency



I was going to the hospital for an operation, when the checkpoint stopped me for having an illegal residency, they let us pass after many attempts of convincing them that it is an emergency case.

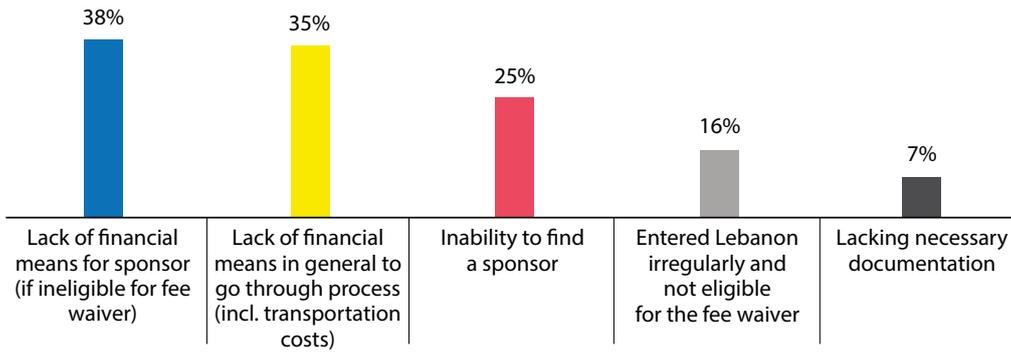
- Syrian refugee in the South, February 2022

- Rates of legal residency continue to be down from the start of 2021 and have stabilized with around 85% of households having at least one member above the age of 15 without legal residency.
- A lack of legal residency has a strong correlation with increased vulnerability.



- In March, households that lacked legal residency were 68% more likely to report reduced access to healthcare, 30% more likely to report inability to purchase essential medicine, 34% more likely to report loss of livelihoods, and 100% more likely to report school dropouts. In terms of coping mechanisms, households where members lacked legal residency were also much more likely to resort to debt as a coping mechanism (36% more likely to go into debt and 74% more likely to buy food on credit).
- A lack of financial resources continues to be the main barrier for 73% of households lacking legal residency. Further, some key informants have suggested that they are fearful of approaching GSO as they have heard that refugees with all the required paperwork are still being issued deportation orders.

Leading factors causing lack of residency



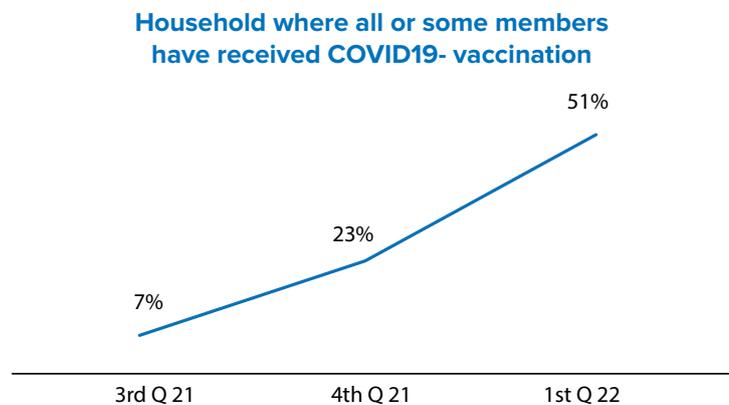
COVID-19

79% of refugees reported knowing the MoPH hotline number	80% of refugees knew that costs of testing and treatment were covered	99% of refugees reported having knowledge of preventative measures to protect against COVID-19	96% of refugees reported having knowledge on how to access testing in case of suspected COVID-19
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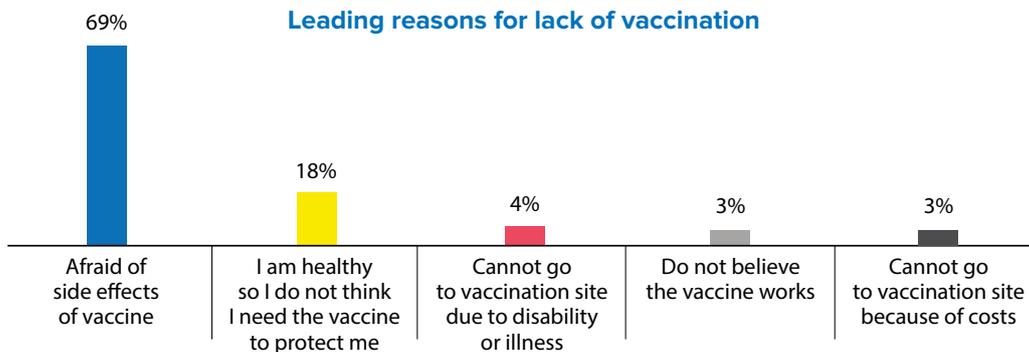
- Record high rates of general COVID-19 knowledge were recorded this month. In particular, it is encouraging to see that now 4 in 5 refugee households know that COVID-19 testing and treatment is free, when just a few quarters ago this rate was only 50%.

- Highly encouraging increases in refugee households reporting being vaccinated continued: from just 3% of refugee households having some or all members vaccinated in June 2021 to a 51% average this past quarter. These improvements likely reflect the impact of UNHCR’s community outreach campaigns, which have helped over 140,000 refugees register for vaccination.

- Unfortunately, in February and March we saw increases in disinterest in pursuing vaccination amongst unvaccinated household members. As of March, 72% of remaining unvaccinated household members were not planning to pursue vaccination, suggesting those remaining unvaccinated are those with the greatest hesitancy.



Leading reasons for lack of vaccination

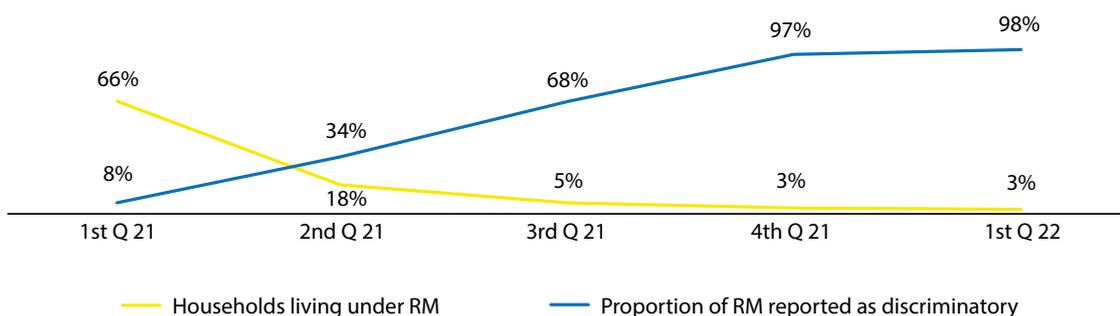


Measures impacting refugees

- Since the national lockdown ended earlier in 2021 there has been a continued drop in refugees reporting to live under some form of restrictive measure, with this and past quarter 3% of refugees reporting to live under some form of restriction. This decrease has been accompanied by a rise in the proportion of measures in place that are discriminatory.

- The measures reported as discriminatory are mostly curfews (81%), nearly all of which (98%) applied only to refugees. The large majority of measures (84%) carried forward from before 2021, and the monitoring shows that many of them are enforced on a discretionary basis, following a security incident or if social tensions increase.

Households affected by Restrictive Measures and the proportion of measures reported as discriminatory



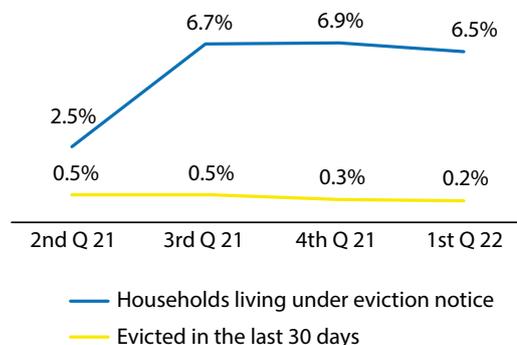
Rent & Evictions

- Rates of refugees living under threat of eviction remains around 7% and are up significantly from the second quarter of last year. While this has not translated into growing rates of actual eviction, it does indicate that the factors that negatively affect refugees' ability to secure stable housing and sustain it over time are increasing.

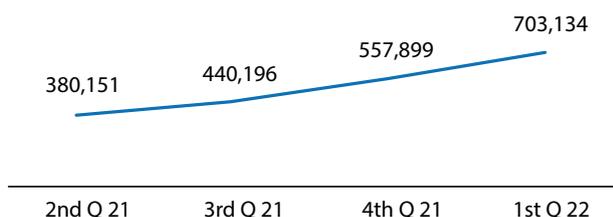
- This situation is being exacerbated by continuing increases in the cost of housing, with prices increasing 26% this quarter alone.

- Further, in February and March record high rates of persons indicated not being able to make their last rental payment.

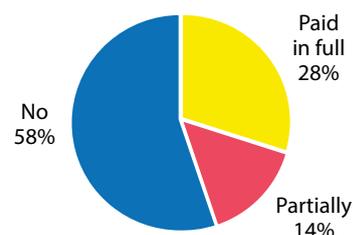
Households living under risk of eviction and actually evicted



Average rent prices (LBP)



Where you able to make your last rental payment?



- Key informant interviews and field staff highlight that there are likely several interrelated reasons for the lack of actual evictions. In line with PM data refugees are entering into debt to pay their rent, however refugees are also increasingly moving to cheaper and/or shared accommodation to avoid eviction. Further, increases in both the amount of assistance and number of persons receiving MCAP, as well as seasonal winterization assistance have helped. Finally, while landlords may be increasing the pressure they put on tenants, they are unlikely to evict because finding new paying tenants will be difficult given the widespread nature of economic hardship and so landlords are willing to negotiate with tenants around payment.
- Nevertheless, flexibility on the part of landlords may be approaching its limits. Last quarter 68% of all assistance from the host community took the form of deferred or lowered rental payments. This quarter however, that figure dropped to 40% and awareness of overall community support is down to 6% now compared to 16% during the same quarter in 2021.

Social Stability

- Reports of tensions with the host community remain stable with 4% of respondents reporting that their household experienced incidents in the past 30 days.
- It is worth noting that households maybe underreporting issues of social tension, as highlighted by one key informant refugees in his community have become used to daily discrimination and harassment.

