



## **PROTECTION MONITORING**

# **Situation of Forcibly Displaced Syrians in Lebanon**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2024**

## Methodology

- Since 2019, UNHCR -in collaboration with different partners- undertakes monthly Protection Monitoring (PM) surveys with the Syrian refugee community residing in all regions of Lebanon. As of January 2024, the implementation of the Protection Monitoring activity is centralized and carried out in partnership with INTERSOS through different data collection tools, including interviews with refugee households and key informants. The PM surveys seek to engage the Syrian refugee population of Lebanon in generating information concerning their situation, support the analysis of trends in the protection environment, assess protection gaps and inform effective response to the needs of refugees. It also contributes to the evidence-based advocacy and programming of UNHCR and its partners, under the framework of the Lebanon Response Plan.

- The present report is one component of the UNHCR's overarching Protection Monitoring programme in Lebanon, which complements other protection activities conducted by UNHCR and partners. The sampling of households and findings presented in this report are representative both at the national and regional levels. This report provides a summary of the Protection Monitoring findings from all regions of Lebanon in the second quarter (April to June) of 2024, with the information collected using Kobo Toolbox. In analysing the protection risks faced by the population, the report integrates UNHCR's age, gender and diversity approach to identify vulnerabilities within the refugee community, thereby informing UNHCR and partners programmatic responses. When specific needs for services, assistance, or information arise during PM interviews, the individuals are referred by UNHCR's monitoring partner to the appropriate specialised services.

- The methodology used in the Protection Monitoring report has recently undergone a revision, transitioning towards a more analytical approach that examines the protection situation of forcibly displaced Syrians in Lebanon from multiple primary reporting sources. The core of the report remains based on data from PM surveys. Additionally, to enhance analysis, a targeted desk review of other existing protection initiatives and surveys was undertaken, including Outreach Volunteers (OV) reports, ad-hoc protection assessments, UNHCR field observations and incident monitoring conducted by UNHCR and partners.

## Key highlights

- ▶ **Tensions with host community:** During the months of April and May, a serious increase in violence against Syrians involved instances of physical altercations, harassment, and growing eviction threats, as reported directly by refugees through UNHCR National Call Centre (NCC).
- ▶ **Administrative measures & legal restrictions:** Security forces and municipalities across the country considerably reinforced the restrictive approach towards Syrian refugees in Q2, including movement restrictions, raids, checkpoints, restrictions on rental and accommodation, data collection, as well as limitations on access to livelihood, basic services and imposition of municipal IDs. Between April and May 2024, the General Security Office (GSO) reiterated restrictions on employment and housing for those lacking legal residency and imposed new fees for residency renewal and work permits, that have significantly increased the financial burden on displaced Syrians..
- ▶ **Collective evictions:** In Q2, there was a significant increase in collective evictions and threats of eviction, with 81% of the total incidents recorded in 2024 occurring between April and June. The announcement of collective evictions by municipalities rather than landlords has become an emerging trend during this quarter, especially in the Bekaa and North.
- ▶ **Reduction in livelihood opportunities:** Half of PM respondents have reported having lost their employment and facing increased difficulties to find livelihood opportunities, while many have attributed this to the impact of the new requirements and fees related to legal residency. Lack of livelihoods is mentioned as one of the factors contributing to higher risks of child labour and gender-based violence.
- ▶ **Socio-economic vulnerabilities:** The worsening of the economic situation continues to affect Syrian refugees' ability to secure food and housing, reaching unprecedented levels in Q2 2024. As rental and living costs continue to rise, a staggering majority of refugee households face significant challenges accessing food and shelter. In Q2, 98% of respondents had to reduce their food intake while 89% reported inability to pay rent. The average monthly income of Syrian households (188 USD) falls below half of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket during the second quarter of the year (414 USD).
- ▶ **Difficulties to access services:** Reduced access to healthcare and specialized services - especially for persons with disabilities - has significantly increased in Q2 2024 due to affordability issues with hospitalisation and treatment fees, together with shortages of services and reduced humanitarian assistance. quarter of 2024, 88% of families reported using this coping mechanism, compared to a stable trend of approximately 76% in previous quarters.
- ▶ **Impact of hostilities in border areas:** As the conflict in South continues, the needs, vulnerabilities, and protection risks of refugees living in areas affected by hostilities increase. This is accompanied by service disruptions, fewer livelihood opportunities, infrastructure damage and safety concerns. Despite all of these challenges, some refugee households are unable to leave the unsafe areas due to the lack of alternatives and/ or restrictions on movements and risk of deportation because of lack of legal residency. Those who displaced also confirm challenges to secure access to livelihoods and/or accommodation elsewhere in the country resulting into pendular movements or even return to their previous place of residence in the unsafe locations using this coping mechanism, compared to a stable trend of approximately 76% in previous quarters.

## Summary figures from Protection Monitoring surveys Jan-Mar 2024



**4,661**  
refugee households interviewed,  
with an average household  
size of 5 individuals



**41%** women  
respondents and **11%**  
female-led households



**12%**  
youth (16-25 yrs)



**11%**  
persons with disabilities



**5%**  
older persons (60+yrs)



**232**  
referrals made for protection follow-up

## Operational context

- The protection situation of Syrian refugees during the second quarter of 2024 has significantly deteriorated. This decline is driven by a series of stringent administrative measures impacting all regions in Lebanon, escalating tensions with the host community and a worsening socio-economic situation. These factors aggravate their living conditions, limit their movements, reduce livelihood opportunities, and increase risks of arbitrary arrest and deportation leading to a significant psychological distress to many refugee households. Furthermore, the continuation of the hostilities in border areas triggers internal displacement and disrupts access to essential services, such as health and education.
- During April and May 2024, social tensions between Syrian refugees and the host community escalated, intensifying the already prevalent anti-refugee sentiment in the country. The aftermath of the incident involving the killing of a political leader in Jbeil and the arrest of alleged perpetrators of Syrian nationality, led to an increase of physical attacks and threats against Syrians in many parts of the country. Due to increased tensions, some humanitarian organizations either suspended or discontinued services in these areas to do no harm. Thereafter, the number of intercommunal incidents considerably reduced in June 2024, however the prevailing atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the Syrian refugee households continued to be reported
- These tensions were accompanied by the application of various administrative measures by municipalities and adoption of much higher and new fees concerning legal residency. On 29 April 2024, the General Security Office (GSO) announced a new fee of LBP 4,900,000 for the renewal of expired residency, including for those individuals who obtained it on the basis of UNHCR certificate. Fees were also increased under other residency categories, such as sponsorship. On 08 May 2024, a new GSO statement “On the regularization of the presence of Syrians in the country” reiterated the restrictions on employment and housing opportunities for those lacking legal residency, creating additional barriers to accessing livelihoods and basic needs.<sup>1</sup>
- Most collective centers are hosting internally displaced Lebanese communities, while the refugees fleeing the hostilities tend to rely on support networks, being hosted by friends or relatives, or rental units. An estimated 25,000 children are affected by the closure of 72 public and private schools in the Southern governorates, while six primary healthcare centers have been closed.
- These measures, paired with the increasingly challenging economic situation, numerous raids, checkpoints and heightened risks of eviction, have contributed to a precarious protection environment for Syrian refugees in Lebanon in Q2 2024. Moreover, the ongoing conflict in border areas, restrictive policies, and heightened social tensions exacerbated vulnerabilities of refugees and diminished their prospects for stability and security.

<sup>1</sup> Lebanon: General Security - posts (general-security.gov.lb), available at <https://www.general-security.gov.lb/ar/posts/418> accessed on 29 August 2024

## Social tensions & administrative measures

- Syrian refugees in Lebanon are facing a highly restrictive institutional environment and increasing tensions with the host community, while the anti-refugee narrative continues to rise. During the second quarter of the year, a series of incidents, announcements and institutional measures have contributed to further deterioration of protection environment, affecting the safety and wellbeing of Syrian refugees.

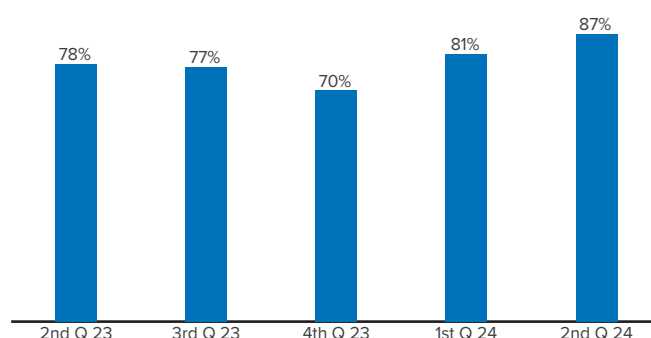
- Tensions between Syrian refugees and Lebanese host community reached a peak between April and May 2024, following the killing of a political leader in Jbeil. These tensions went beyond words in many instances and included physical violence and citizens taking matters into their own hands – both of which are alarming developments. Numerous security incidents, instances of severe physical violence and harassment against Syrians were reported, mainly in Mount Lebanon, Beirut and North governorates, while various groups and neighbourhoods across these areas gathered to disseminate statements and serious threats against Syrians residents. These increased tensions coincided with numerous restrictions on accommodation in certain areas. The analysis of the protection escalations implemented through UNHCR National Call Centre (NCC) indicated a concerning 200% increase in the number of calls received by refugees reporting safety incidents and administrative measures between April and May, if compared to March 2024. This included cases that reported being beaten, injured and verbally harassed, as well as damage on personal property and documentation. Amidst such unstable and unsafe conditions in Lebanon, informants reported that refugees have relocated to safer areas of the country, considered traveling onward by sea and limited their movement as coping mechanisms.



**We do not feel safe and there is nothing we can do to guarantee our safety.**

- Syrian refugee residing in Burj Hammoud

**Chart 1. Incidents based on discrimination against refugees**



- 87% of PM respondents reporting safety and security incidents have expressed that these were discriminatory against refugees, compared to 78% in the same period of last year. However, given the current stance on restrictions related to legal residency and the fear of arrest among Syrians, it is known that many victims of discrimination and harassment opt to not report such incidents. At the same time, PM reports of host community support remain relatively stable. 7% of refugee families receive support from their Lebanese neighbours, who allow them to buy food on credit and reduce/postpone rental payments. This support has become highly apparent in the South, where 15% report to receive assistance from the local community, a significant increase if compared to pre-conflict periods (3% in Q3 2023). Such a rise could be related to higher levels of solidarity, compassion and a sense of shared hardship, given the situation in the South.

- In addition to incidents of intercommunal tensions and violence, an increase in the implementation of stringent administrative measures on Syrians has been observed during these second quarter of 2024. Notably, collective eviction notices issued by municipalities were widespread, while raids and arrests at checkpoints stoked fears of deportation.



- Q2 saw a continuation of administrative measures targeting Syrians, with 189 municipalities imposing new measures, a decrease from the last quarter of 2023<sup>2</sup>. This reduction could be linked to the fact that some of these measures are issued at Governorate and not municipal level, implying a wider impact. When comparing the figures for 2024, the number of recorded measures remained relatively consistent in January, February, and March, with a significant increase of 230% during the second quarter of the year, especially during April and May.

- These measures include movement restrictions, raids, imposition of taxes, checkpoints, strict registration/legal requirements, restrictions on rental and accommodation, data collection, livelihood, basic services and imposition of municipal IDs. Notably, shop closures, raids, confiscation of vehicles and the imposition of taxes and fees have been significantly reported during this quarter. Informants across Lebanon have reported a 363% increase in the number of shops owned by Syrians being raided and shut down from Q1 to Q2 2024, as well as the temporary closure of some business owned by Lebanese employing Syrians until proper documentation is issued for the workers. Moreover, the statement issued by the Directorate of the General Security Office (GSO)<sup>3</sup> in May reiterating the restrictions for Lebanese citizens to employ, shelter or provide housing for Syrians residing illegally in Lebanon, among other measures, has heavily impacted their protection situation and further diminished their economic capabilities.

- Since the beginning of the year, numerous municipalities have imposed additional fees on Syrians for various reasons, such as extra residency fees, renewal of documentation or higher municipal payments (such as water and cleaning) than local residents. Regarding curfews, PM respondents in Q2 have expressed that in 90% of cases these are strictly enforced, with penalties for those breaching the curfew, compared to an average 67% throughout 2023. For instance, in some areas of the Bekaa the measures applied by municipalities for newcomers have tightened, as they need to notify either the municipality, State Security or the Lebanese Armed Forces of their intention to settle. In other areas, the LAF has prohibited refugees from building or enlarging their shelters or units, while in some municipalities refugees face a 6 million LBP tax for relocating or setting up tents and are prohibited from using building materials like concrete, unless their landlord has obtained the necessary approvals. Violators using concrete risk being arrested.



**We cannot do anything about the situation in Lebanon, the recent decisions are unfair.**

- Male Syrian refugee residing in Koura district

- Moreover, community sources reported an increase in onward movement intentions in 2024, triggered by those heightened risks of deportation, economic challenges, social tensions and administrative measures. However, the number of attempted movements by sea has decreased due to the vigilance by the Cypriot coast guards and Lebanese security measures.

## Legal developments

- During the second quarter of the year, legal residency has emerged as a significant concern for Syrian refugees, reported through Protection Monitoring, Key Informant Interviews, Outreach Volunteers, and qualitative reports. The impact of lacking valid legal residency has intensified, with movement restrictions increasing from **47% in the first quarter to 57%**. An exponential surge of psychological distress triggered by such a situation reached 24% in Q2, contrasting with just 2% of families reporting the same issue at the beginning of last year. These levels of distress represent the highest values in all PM historical trends.

- Furthermore, the prevalence of refugee households with at least one member above 15 years old lacking legal residency remains alarmingly high, standing at 89% of all families in the current quarter. Notably, legal residency gaps are more pronounced among females (52%) than males (48%).



**We are always in fear since we lack legal residency.**

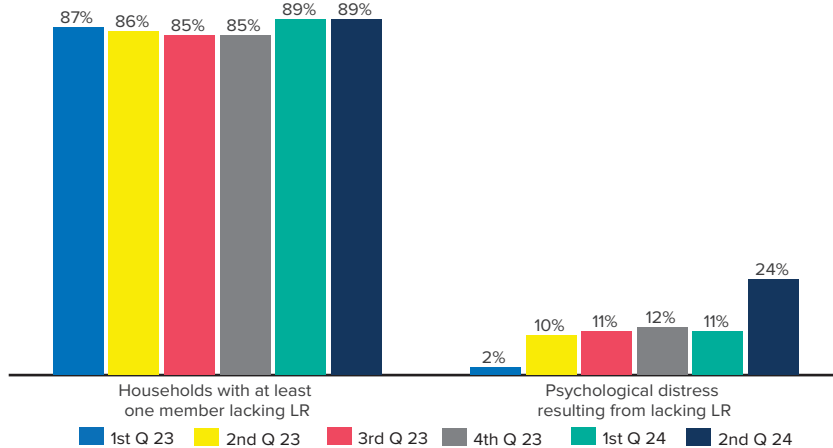
- Syrian refugee residing in Burj Hammoud

<sup>2</sup>The figures related to administrative measures are indicative and only represent the number of incidents that come to UNHCR's attention in a given time. This should not be understood as a comprehensive list, as the situation evolves daily

<sup>3</sup>Lebanese General Security - posts (general-security.gov.lb)

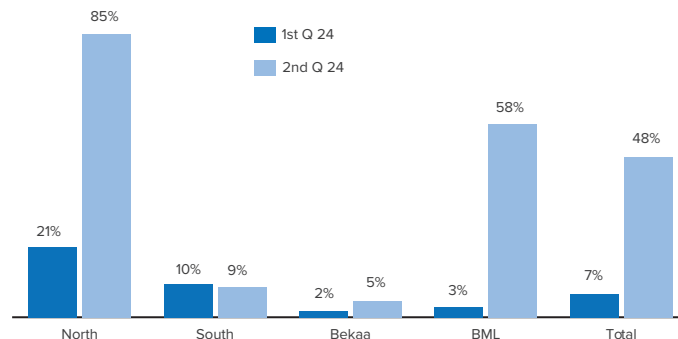
This disparity suggests potential gender-based obstacles in obtaining legal residency, which could be due to social, economic, or administrative factors.

**Chart 2. Households lacking legal residency and effects on their psychological wellbeing**



- Moreover, **48%** of interviewed refugees who were affected by administrative measures have expressed that lacking valid legal residency is the reason for being targeted, a significant increase compared to 7% at the beginning of the year. This was very apparent in the North and BML, with 85% and 58% of respondents linking these two aspects respectively, compared to 9% in the South and 5% in Bekaa.
- This sharp rise of refugee concerns in the North reflects the impact of recent new legal fees and administrative measures, following the statement issued by the Directorate of the General Security Office (GSO) in May and a series of decisions announced in the North Governorate, requesting municipalities and mukhtars to control the movements of displaced Syrians, evict all those without legal residency and requiring approval as a condition to any new collective shelters and ITS.

**Chart 3. Administrative measures targeting individuals without legal residency**



- In April 2024, a GSO memo announced the fee of LBP 4,900,000 for all residency regularizations and renewals in case the residency is expired, and the increase of work permit fees for foreign nationals by 45 times, from 1,800,000 LBP to 82,000,000 LBP. During the month of June, UNHCR received testimonies of confiscations of documentation of some Syrian business owners, followed by deportation orders if they fail to regularize their situation.



**We are unsure about what will happen with the restrictions, and we can't afford to legalize our papers.**

- Syrian refugee residing in El Meten district

- Comparing to Q1 2024, the share of respondents who referred to the lack of financial means as a cause for lacking legal residency has slightly increased (from 36% to 39%). Similarly to previous quarter, the other two main reasons for lacking valid legal residency during Q2 were irregular entry into Lebanon (33%) and inability to find a sponsor (28%).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Q1 2024: lack of financial means 36%, entering Lebanon irregularly 34%, and inability find a sponsor 25%.

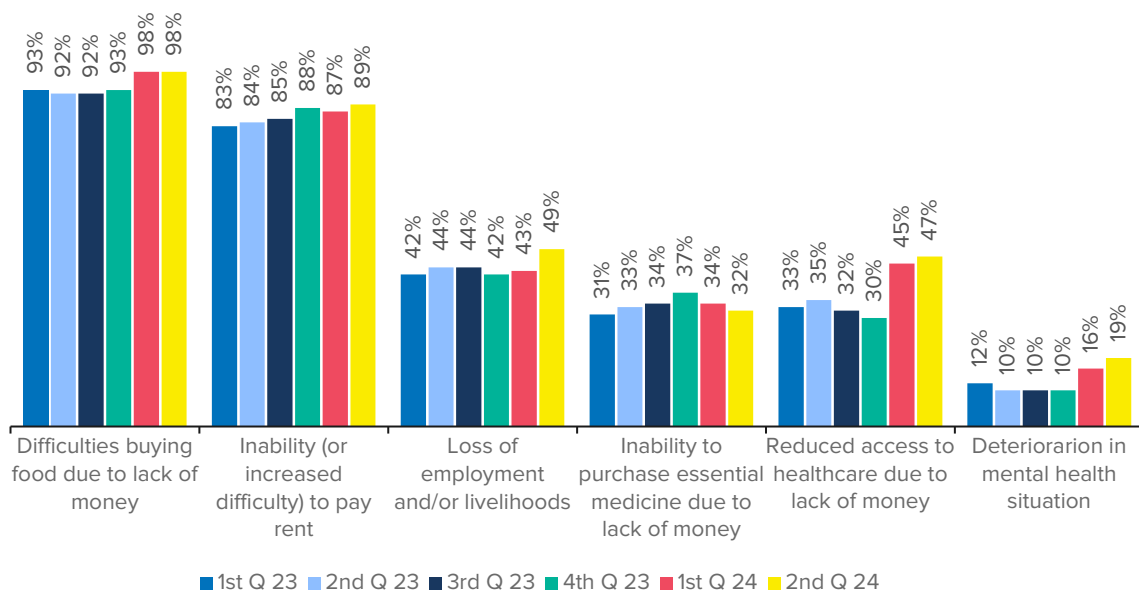
## Impact of the socio-economic situation & access to services

- The economic hardship that Lebanon is experiencing since 2019 continues to be one of the driving forces contributing to the worsening situation and increased vulnerabilities of Syrian refugees in the country. This limits their access to basic services, such as healthcare and education, obtain food and maintain their livelihoods. Living costs, rental prices and levels of debt continue to rise, while labour opportunities and safety decrease as a result of the recent administrative measures.

- The consultations with refugee communities under UNHCR’s Protection Monitoring program during Q2 2024 revealed that most socioeconomic vulnerabilities have escalated to the highest since Q1 2023 levels. In particular, Syrian refugee households experience the gravest socioeconomic challenges to date when it comes nutrition, housing, and access to health care, which also adversely affect their psychical and mental wellbeing. Food security remains to be the primary concern to almost all refugee households, 98% of whom have reported inability or reduced capacity of buying food due to the lack of money. As reported by Outreach Volunteers and some PM respondents, the lack of food is affecting the physical wellbeing of children in some of the most vulnerable refugee households. The heightened vulnerability related to nutritional deficiencies among Syrian refugees living below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) has also been reported through VASyR<sup>5</sup>.

A second top protection concern affecting a substantial number of refugee households is related to housing and potential risk of eviction – 89% of refugee respondents informed that they find themselves unable to afford the escalating rental rates (see Chart 4 below for details).

**Chart 4. Impact of the socio-economic situation in refugee households as per Protection Monitoring surveys**



- The deterioration of access to healthcare continued to increase in Q2 2024, with almost half of the respondents confirming their difficulties to afford healthcare services and purchase medication because of financial constraints.

- Additionally, respondents residing in the South also reported a lack of access to health care due to heavily disrupted medical services in the border areas affected by hostilities. In the course of 2024, at least six Public Health Centres (PHCs) in Marjaayoun and Bent Jbeil districts have closed their facilities because of the security situation. Other PHCs frequently suspend their operation for some time depending on the proximity of shelling. Furthermore, refugees who continue to reside in the areas affected by conflict have expressed fears to travel to medical facilities located in other areas due to the likelihood of falling a victim of shelling or possible escalation of the security situation.

<sup>5</sup>VASyR 2023: Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon. Page 97. UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP



- The price increases, movement restrictions, and discontinuation of support for dispensaries offering affordable medicine have severely limited Syrian refugees' access to healthcare. Out of those refugee families having medical needs (43% of all respondents) and not receiving healthcare, 65% could not afford treatment costs and 39% were unable to pay for hospitalization. Key informant interviews across the country revealed that many refugees have to pay high transportation costs to reach distant Primary Health Centers (PHCs), in addition to expensive medical bills. As per geographical comparisons, the North seems to be the region with most stable trends related to difficulties in access to healthcare. Qualitative reports indicate that in some instances, health providers in the North and Bekaa confiscate the IDs of Syrian refugees who are not able to pay hospital fees and enforce them to sign a commitment to pay the bill in instalments. Such practices prompt refugees to seek medical attention only in emergencies. As a result, health needs are often not met, contributing to a deterioration in their well-being. The FGDs conducted with refugees in the North indicated that the increase in intercommunal tensions since April/May 2024 resulted in some refugees avoiding to attend medical appointments due to the fear of being arbitrarily arrested when crossing checkpoints.

In an environment significantly affected by administrative measures and tensions with hosting community, livelihood opportunities remain limited for Syrian refugees. For example, movement limitations have reduced the options for refugees to reach their workplace, while wide-spread closures of shops owned or managed by Syrians have shrunk work opportunities and exacerbated social division and tensions. The risk of arbitrary arrest at checkpoints and consequent deportation is another factor limiting refugees to find a place of work. Many key informants across the country reported in Q2 2024 that they were unable to travel to their respective work locations due to the fear of crossing checkpoints, arrests and potential deportation. Another example is the GSO announcement in early May 2024<sup>6</sup>, that urged Lebanese nationals to avoid employing or renting accommodation to Syrians who lack valid legal residency and not allowing those registered with UNHCR to work outside their specified work sectors. Even if they manage to find employment, some employers take advantage of their vulnerable situation by paying low salaries due to their lack of legal residency.



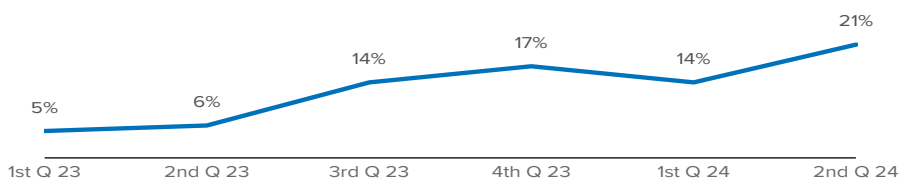
**Our heads of households are facing difficulties finding jobs due to the lack of legal residencies.**

- Syrian refugee residing in Aley district

- As the poverty situation deepens and meeting basic needs becomes increasingly challenging, the risk of gender-based violence (GBV) is exacerbated, which has led to a rise in intimate partner violence (IPV) in refugee families as reported by GBV response actors<sup>7</sup>. Respondents in the North Governorate report that women have started working more in agriculture, as men are comparatively more affected by movement limitations derived from the recent administrative measure. At the same time, increasing risks of sexual exploitation and abuse against women and girls working in the agricultural field and by landlords have been flagged by the Gender-based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS). Moreover, rising levels of poverty caused by unemployment among Syrians are increasing tensions within refugee households, while the movement limitations provoked by checkpoints may limit the access and transportation to specialized GBV services.

- Issues with accessibility to specialized services continue to be reported by persons with specific needs. As illustrated in Chart 5 below, this figure is on the rise since last year, with 21% of PWSN not having access to required care or specialized services during Q2. Out of these, 83% are families with at least one member with disabilities. In 95% of the reported cases, the lack of financial means to go to the place of services, including transportation costs and service fees, is the reason for not receiving the required care.

**Chart 5. Persons with specific needs (PWSN) without access to specialized services**

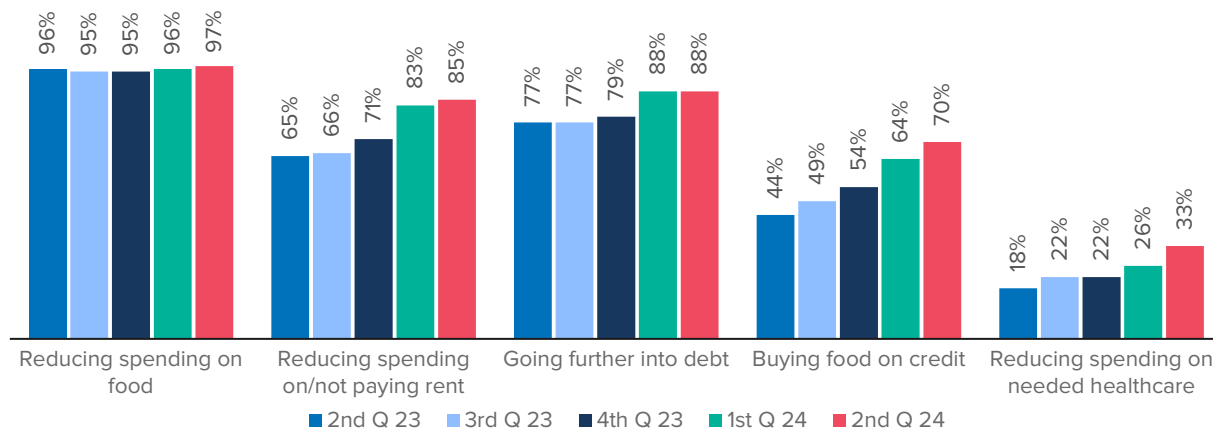


<sup>6</sup>Lebanese General Security - posts ([general-security.gov.lb](http://general-security.gov.lb))

<sup>7</sup>GBV IMS Steering Committee and GBV IMS Task Force Lebanon, 2023: Overview of GBV Trends in Lebanon, 2023 Midyear Report.

- To cope with these hardships, refugee households are adopting different modalities to minimize the economic impact on their daily life. Reducing food expenditure, going further into debt and not paying rent are reported by a considerable majority of refugee households (85-97%), as reflected in Chart 6. The reductions in the purchase and consumption of food have resulted in families shifting to cheaper food options. As reported by informants in Chtaura, Bekaa, some families give only bread and tea to babies and children due to their inability to afford milk.

**Chart 6. Main coping mechanisms to respond to the economic situation**



**We forgot what meat and chicken taste like**

- Syrian refugee residing in Nabatieh district

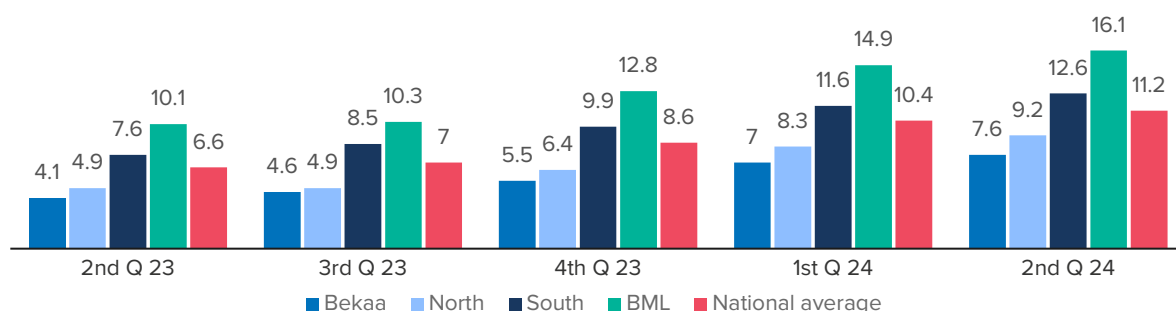
## Rent, evictions, income and debt

- The ongoing socio-economic situation, severely affected by more stringent application of administrative measures and enforcement of evictions, along with new requirements for the renewal of legal residency significantly impacted the ability of Syrian refugees to cover their rental expenses and secure housing in Q2. As indicated in Charts 4 and 6 above, the percentage of families facing challenges related to housing keeps rising, as 85% of households have reported reducing or not paying rent as a coping mechanism during Q2 2024, compared to 65% in the same period last year.

- The interviews with key informants confirm that such a reduced capacity for paying rent is not only a result of the challenging socio-economic situation, but it is caused by the decreased job opportunities following the enforcement of administrative measures and tensions against Syrians during the first half of the year. Furthermore, Syrian refugees without valid legal residency face additional barriers to access housing and livelihood opportunities and thus are more vulnerable to the risk of eviction. Consequently, many refugees have resorted to sharing accommodation with other relatives, borrowing money to pay landlords, or negotiating paying rent in instalments.

- The country continues to observe a steady rise in rental costs. In Q2 2024, the average rental price per month for a Syrian refugee family was 11.2 million LBP, which represents a 70% increase compared to the same period last year. The continuation of hostilities in the South, which is triggering displacement of both host and refugee communities, has contributed to exploitative rises in rental fees. In the North, refugees have expressed that the new residency fees established by the GSO in late April have worsened the dynamic with property owners, as many landlords are doubling the rental fees.

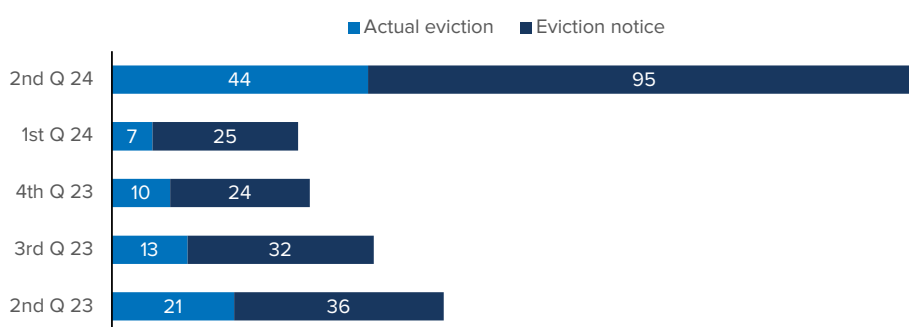
**Chart 7. Average monthly rental price per region in million LBP**



- Similar to Q1 2024, 90% of respondents across all regions were paying rent, while 10% were either exempted from rent, working for rent, or receiving shelter support from UNHCR or other humanitarian organizations.

- As rental prices rise and administrative measures regulating rental agreements increase, the risk of eviction also grows proportionally. Ad-hoc assessments by UNHCR and partners indicate that the number of collective evictions – which include incidents affecting more than five households at once - are increasing, especially during the second quarter of the year. Out of the 171 incidents related to collective evictions taking place since the beginning of the year (81% were implemented between April and June 2024). The majority of incidents recorded have taken place in the North and Bekaa, while several municipalities in the North have also announced eviction notices requiring all refugees to leave. The announcement of collective evictions by municipalities rather than landlords has become a new emerging trend of Q2 2024, especially in the Bekaa and North.

**Chart 8. Incidents of collective evictions recorded by UNHCR ad-hoc assessments**

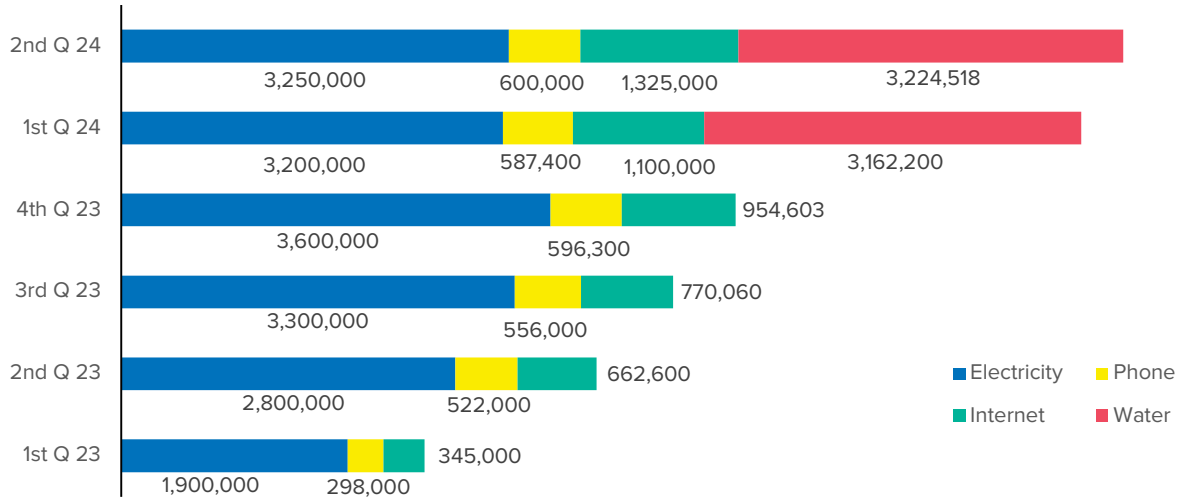


- This is aligned with the significant growth of collective evictions reported through PM in Q2, 45% of all evictions compared to a rather stable historic trend of 10%. Many interviewed refugees reported that the eviction was accompanied by the retention (21%) or destruction (14%) of their personal assets.

- In addition to the increased difficulties in paying rent and the consequent higher risk of eviction, 83% of interviewed families report being unable to afford essential household services and utilities, including water, electricity, and communications costs. When aggregating all these utilities costs (see Chart 9 below), the total amount reaches 8.4 million LBP in Q2 2024. Factoring in the average rent value (as shown in Chart 7, 11.2 million LBP), the total monthly housing-related costs amounts to nearly 20 million LBP.

- In this regard it should be noted that the average income by refugee households is only sufficient to cover housing-related costs, without accounting for other expenses such as food, health, education, or transportation.

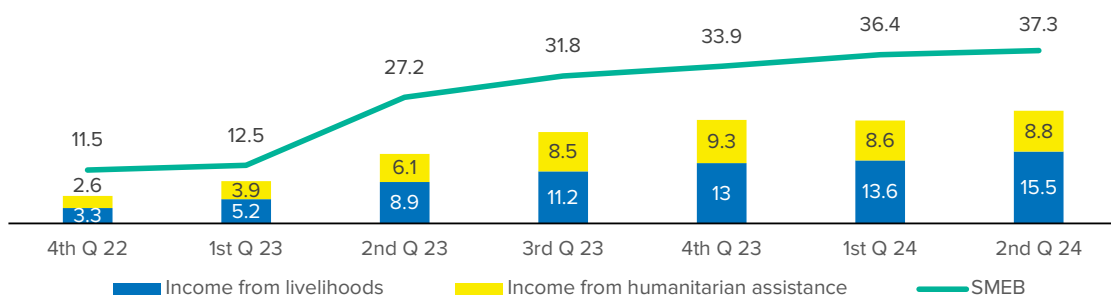
**Chart 9. Average monthly spendings of refugee households on electricity, phone, internet and water (LBP)**



NB: Water-related costs started to be monitored through PM surveys only as of Q1 2024.

- The average income that refugee households earned during Q2 2024 amounted to 20.6 million LBP monthly (roughly 188 USD), a figure that has remained relatively stable in the last three quarters despite the increasing living costs. Relatedly, the portion of refugee income that comes from humanitarian assistance (approximately 8.8 million LBP, 98 USD per family), reduced as a result of the funding cuts experienced by humanitarian organizations since the end of last year.
- As of June 2024, the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) for a family of five reached 37.3 million LBP (approximately 414 USD), marking a 37% increase compared to the same quarter last year, according to the World Food Programme (WFP)<sup>8</sup>. General inflation stands at 3.5% this quarter and 52% annually, while food inflation reached 2.3% in the last quarter and 32% over the past year<sup>9</sup>. The SMEB is almost double the average amount of income of refugee households in Q2 2024, demonstrating their precarious economic situation, while the income reported by female headed-households is 39% lower than male ones.

**Chart 10. Average income compared to SMEB (in millions of LBP)**

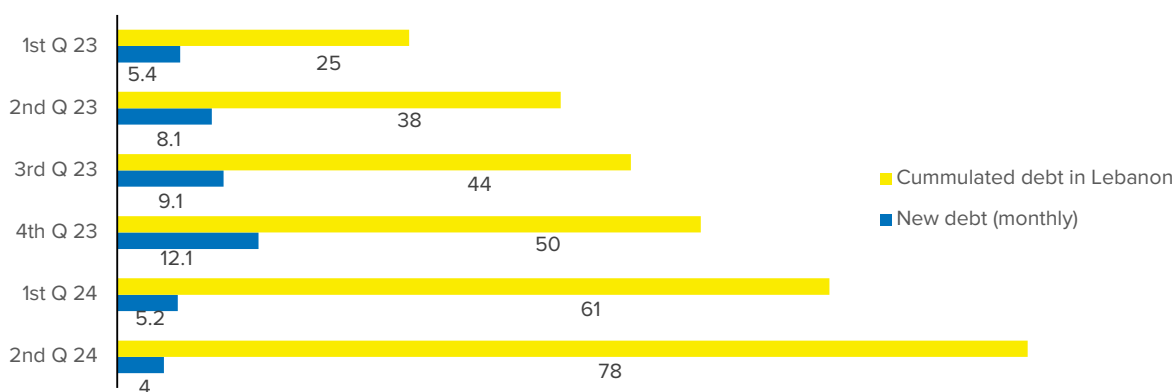


- Going into further debt to cope with the dire economic situation continues to be reported by 88% of interviewed refugees, a 14% increase if compared to the previous year. During Q2, the levels of debt continue to rise, reaching 78 million LBP as the average debt cumulated by refugee families. However, the amount of new debt, which had been rising until last year, has declined in 2024. This decrease could indicate reduced capacity among refugees to depend on credit and settle outstanding debts, which may result in growing reliance on unsustainable methods to meet basic needs.

<sup>8</sup> World Food Programme, 2024. RAM Food Security Analysis, Lebanon Market Monitor, June 2024. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/wfp-ram-food-security-analysis-lebanon-market-monitor-june-2024>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

**Chart 11. New and cumulated debts of refugee households (in millions of LBP)**



## Child labour and education

- The restrictive socio-economic and protection situation of refugee households in Lebanon is significantly impacting Syrian children. Reduced work opportunities for Syrian adults, rising living costs, reductions in assistance, movement restrictions, administrative measures, checkpoints, and risks of arrest and deportation are forcing many Syrian refugee families to send their children to work.
- Child labour remains a highly sensitive and underreported issue. Consequently, this increase is not visible in Protection Monitoring (PM) nor Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) results, which report a consistent and low trend of 4-7% of working refugee children between 2023 and 2024.
- However, assessments undertaken by UNICEF state that 1 in 3 Syrian families in Lebanon have sent their children to work to provide for the household's survival<sup>10</sup>. Also, FGDs conducted with refugees in the Bekaa and North showed that some families had to send their children to work because adult males avoid going to work due to raids and incidents of group deportations. 80% of key informants interviewed in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (BML) have reported that children are being sent to work to help increase the family income, especially following the legal residency campaign initiated in May and the general believe that children are less likely to be arrested. Economic hardship remains as the main reason families engage their children in labour, as 91% of families report that the income from parents or caregivers is insufficient to afford household costs.



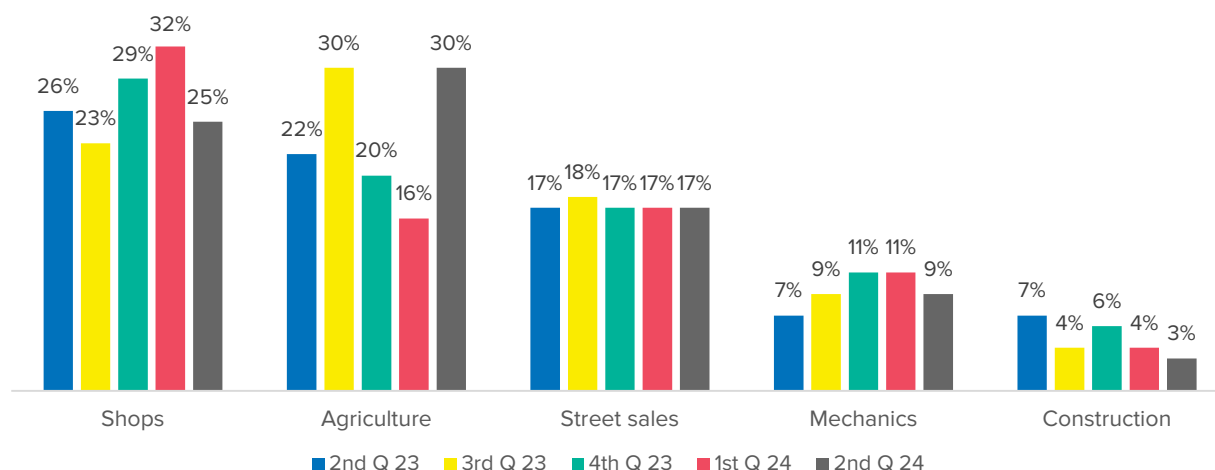
**We don't have enough money to enroll our children in schools, they should work and support the family.**

- Syrian refugee in Baalbek district

- Respondents expressed that this is negatively affecting children's physical and mental well-being, including reports of physical abuse and harassment by employers in the South. Community sources in the North and BML have reported that there have been increases in substance abuse among children.
- The types of labour that children are engaged in include garbage collection, selling tissues, car repairs, working in shops and construction, with an increase in agricultural work during the second quarter due to seasonal demand. 17% percent of these children are reportedly working in the streets, and 9% are engaged in jobs with physical hazards, exacerbating their risk of exposure to violence and protection concerns. Among the working children identified through PM interviews, 81% are boys and the majority (44%) are between 12-14 years old, while 76% of working children are out of learning.

<sup>10</sup> Lebanon UNICEF, December 2023. Trapped in a downward spiral. The unrelenting toll of Lebanon's crisis on children. available at <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/10866/file/UNICEF%20CFRA%202023%20EN.pdf>

Chart 12 Types of child labour as per PM results



- As per UNHCR and Education Sector analysis, the scholastic year ended in all 340 second shift schools for over 160,000 refugee students with an average of 129 teaching days (by comparison in European countries the average school year has 165-200 teaching days)<sup>11</sup>. While still facing challenges, in BML, the North and the Bekaa, this academic year was considered as the most stable of the past five years as there were no teacher strikes or lengthy closures for public health or political reasons. However, education has been significantly disrupted in the South, with 72 public and private schools (including 8 second shift schools) closed following the onset of the conflict. This has impacted 23,000 students (out of which around 2,900 are in the second shift) and around 1,900 teachers. Many schools moved to online teaching in February, followed by certain challenges such as technical issues, lack of devices, limited internet connectivity, and digital literacy gaps. Hub schools also opened, but they were largely not accessible to refugee students. Additional challenges include financial constraints to reach hub schools, further de-prioritization of education at the household level during conflict, and caregivers' fear of sending their children to schools.

- Therefore, the continued hostilities in the South have had a profound impact on Syrian children residing in conflict-affected and/or border areas, exacerbating their vulnerability. According to UNICEF<sup>12</sup>, the conflict has not only disrupted their education but also exposed them to various forms of violence and trauma, leading to long-term psychological and physical effects. Disruption of schooling, combined with the traumatic experiences of war, may lead to significant emotional and educational deficits.

## Mental Health

- The mental health and wellbeing of Syrian refugees in Lebanon continues to deteriorate, heavily affected by the consistent socioeconomic challenges, risks of eviction, deportation and detentions, tensions with the host community and the administrative measures targeting their presence in the country.

- PM respondents reported a range of mild or isolated symptoms affecting the sleep, appetite, socialization, energy and mood (26% respondents), as well as severe depression-related indicators reported by 6%. Economic hardship continues to be identified as the main cause (96%), together with personal problems (23%), tensions with host community (9%, an increase compared with previous quarters) and evictions (2%).

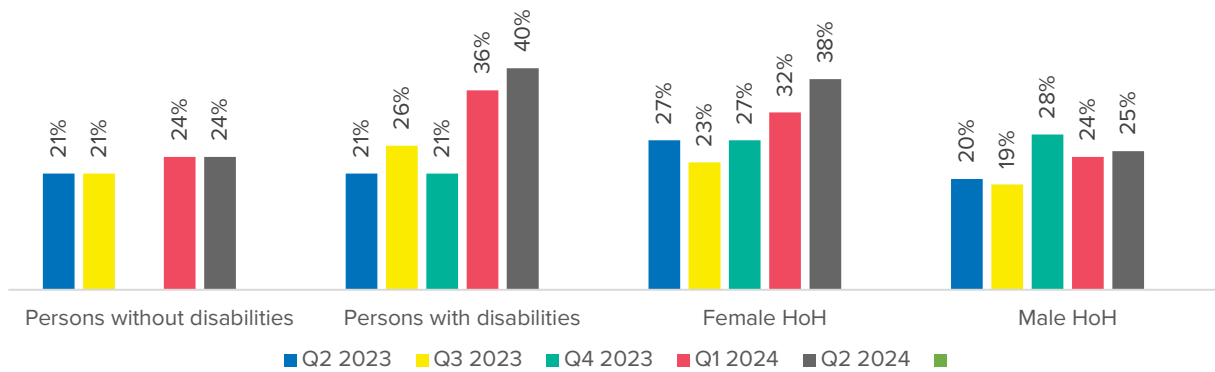
- Several intersecting factors impact mental health outcomes of refugee households. Both female-headed households and female respondents report to experience mental health symptoms at a higher rate than male respondents, while 40% of persons with disabilities indicate to face psychological distress, compared to 24% of those without disabilities. Notably, all respondents - regardless of their characteristics - report a significantly higher impact on their mental health since the beginning of 2024.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021. *The Organisation of School Time in Europe – Primary and General Secondary Education – 2021/22*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/publications/organisation-school-time-europe-primary-and-general-secondary-education-202122>

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, April 2024: *Caught in the crossfire: The Impact of Six Months of Conflict on Children in Lebanon* <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/11156/file/Caught%20in%20cross%20fire%20EN%20.pdf>



**Chart 13. Prevalence of psychological symptoms among PM respondents, disaggregated**



- This is paired with the continuation of the hostilities in the South and pendular/secondary movement of both refugees and host community. South respondents are increasingly reporting the effect of the ongoing conflict, crossfire, bombardment and disruption of services in border areas in relation on their mental health. Psychologists and case workers<sup>13</sup> in the South observed an increase in the severity in symptoms of psychological distress among women, men and children, with children experiencing symptoms such as bedwetting and nightmares. As the conflict persists, many refugees are either remaining or returning to affected areas, with the consequent increase in vulnerabilities, protection risks and disruption of essential services.



**We are worried about the situation in the south, we are mentally exhausted and not ready or prepared for another war.**

- Outreach volunteer in Nabatieh

<sup>11</sup> INTERSOS, May 2024. Context Update Report on Lebanon Southern Borders.

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