Funded by the European Union

# Community Conflict Mapping

## Report Summary

AUGUST 2024

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# Introduction

This report summary outlines the key findings and recommendations from a comprehensive conflict mapping exercise, conducted across 12 local communities in Lebanon: Mashta Hammoud/Mashta Hassan, Fnaidek, Tikrit, Beddawi, Jabal Mohsen/Tebbeneh, Mina, Deir Al-Ahmar, Baalbek, Saida, Barja, Hay el Gharbeh/Ghobeiri, and Chiyah/Ain El Remmeneh.

The study was carried out under the "Working for Engagement, Acceptance, and Mediation: A Community-Based Approach to Social Cohesion in Lebanon – WE'AM" project, funded by the European Union and led by Oxfam in partnership with Right to Play, SHiFT, and ALEF, and aiming to foster consensus and social cohesion within those communities.

*The community conflict mapping study was conducted by InfoPro, contracted by Oxfam in the framework of the WE'AM project, by Principal Investigator Dr. Imad Salamey (imad.salamey@lau.edu.lb) and Co-Principal Investigator Wael Kassem (wael@infopro.com.lb).*

# Objectives of the Study

The conflict mapping exercise was conducted as part of the WE'AM project, with the data collection carried out between December 2023 and February 2024. The primary objectives were (1) to understand the drivers and root causes of tensions between community groups, (2) assess their willingness to engage in collaborative initiatives for addressing community problems, (3) explore the role of women in promoting social cohesion, and (4) identify present actors and stakeholders influencing tensions and conflicts within each community, both positively and negatively.

These objectives align with the overarching goals of the WEAM project, which aims to build consensus and social cohesion among communities by addressing drivers of tensions at the community level, disseminate gender-responsive conflict prevention and resolution tools and methods, and mainstream community-level social cohesion into programming.

Ultimately, the findings from this conflict mapping exercise are intended to inform and guide the implementation of the WE'AM project's activities, ensuring that interventions are tailored to the specific needs and dynamics of each community, thereby enhancing the project's overall effectiveness in promoting social cohesion in Lebanon.

# Methodology

The conflict analysis methodology employed in this study was built upon Wehr's[1] criteria and contemporary approaches, examining local conflict dynamics across 12 Lebanese communities. The research adopted an inclusive qualitative approach, integrating a multi-layered review of conflict development — covering historical, social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions — along with examining the roles of key actors, primary drivers of tension, and the dynamic relationships that shape conflicts. Data collection encompassed a comprehensive literature review, field observations, semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). A total of 48 KIIs were conducted, ensuring equal gender representation and diverse stakeholder participation, including civil society activists, local authorities, and refugee community leaders.

The study also incorporated 25 FGDs across the 12 communities, each comprising 8-10 members, with women constituting 49.6% of the 234 participants. These FGDs were categorized into two types: those involving local authorities and community leaders, and those engaging Lebanese and refugee community members. Field observations following each FGD captured socio-economic and political nuances, supplemented by photographic evidence.

The research adhered to OECD ethical guidelines, ensuring voluntary participation and data protection. Data triangulation and analysis using the Qualitative Interview Analyst tool enabled the identification of patterns and relationships between actors at various levels, with gender issues and perspectives of youth and marginalized groups mainstreamed throughout the analysis.

1. Wehr, P. (1979). Conflict regulation. Routledge & CRC Press. https://www.routledge.com/Conflict-Regulation/Wehr/p/book/9780367164911?srsltid=AfmBOoq-80z18QCOjG2kOgbGrTs6QUsXTiEsN4SgJz3TpE08YpBmwLMs

# Key Insights into Community Tensions and Resilience in Lebanon

The conflict mapping exercise revealed a complex web of factors driving tension (drivers of tension), while also highlighting the vital role of community efforts in fostering cohesion and addressing those tensions (connectors).

## The drivers of tension include:

1. **Economic Hardships and Unemployment:** Economic vulnerabilities, exacerbated by limited access to opportunities and high unemployment rates, are significant drivers of tension across communities. The economic crisis has had a profound impact on the lives of residents, leading to increased poverty, migration, and a sense of hopelessness, particularly among the youth. The lack of job prospects and the widening income gap have fueled frustrations and heightened the risk of conflict, as individuals struggle to meet their basic needs and provide for their families.

2. **Sectarian and Political Tensions:** Long-standing sectarian and political divides, often manipulated by local and national political figures, continue to deepen social rifts and fuel conflict across communities. These divisions are deeply entrenched in the social fabric of Lebanon, shaping identities, loyalties, and power dynamics within and between communities. Political parties and sectarian groups exploit these rifts to maintain their influence, often at the expense of social cohesion and stability. The resulting tensions manifest in various forms, from interpersonal disputes to large-scale protests and violent clashes.

3. **Impact of Syrian Refugees:** The influx of Syrian refugees has intensified resource competition, highlighting the need for inclusive support mechanisms that consider the needs of both host communities and refugees. The presence of refugees has strained local infrastructure, services, and job markets, exacerbating pre-existing socio-economic challenges. Tensions between host communities and refugees are often fueled due to perceived inequalities in aid distribution, cultural differences, and competition over limited resources. However, there are also instances of solidarity and cooperation between these groups, underscoring the potential for peaceful coexistence and mutual support.

4. **Governance Challenges and Institutional Trust:** Across the 12 communities, the absence of effective governance and the lack of trust in formal institutions have emerged as significant factors contributing to instability and conflict. The perceived inadequacy of state services, corruption, and the unequal distribution of resources have eroded public confidence in the government's ability to address community needs. This institutional vacuum has allowed non-state actors, such as political parties, armed groups, and clan leaders, to fill the gap, further undermining the authority of formal governance structures.

5. **Increased Tension at the Intersection of Gender, Age, and Marginalization:** The conflict mapping exercise has highlighted the distinct experiences and vulnerabilities of women, youth, and marginalized groups within the context of community tensions. Women, while often acting as peacemakers and community leaders, face disproportionate economic burdens, exacerbating social tensions. Youth, grappling with high unemployment and limited opportunities, are vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups or involvement in criminal activities, further fueling instability. Marginalized groups, including refugees, the elderly, and people with disabilities, experience heightened vulnerability due to their restricted access to resources and support, which deepens their exclusion and heightens conflict. These overlapping factors collectively drive tensions within communities.

6. **Environmental Pressures and Resource Management:** Environmental factors, such as water scarcity, land degradation, and inadequate waste management, have emerged as significant contributors to community tensions. Competition over limited natural resources, particularly in rural and agricultural areas, has fueled conflicts between different groups. The lack of effective resource management and environmental governance has exacerbated these challenges, highlighting the need for sustainable and equitable approaches to resource allocation and conservation.

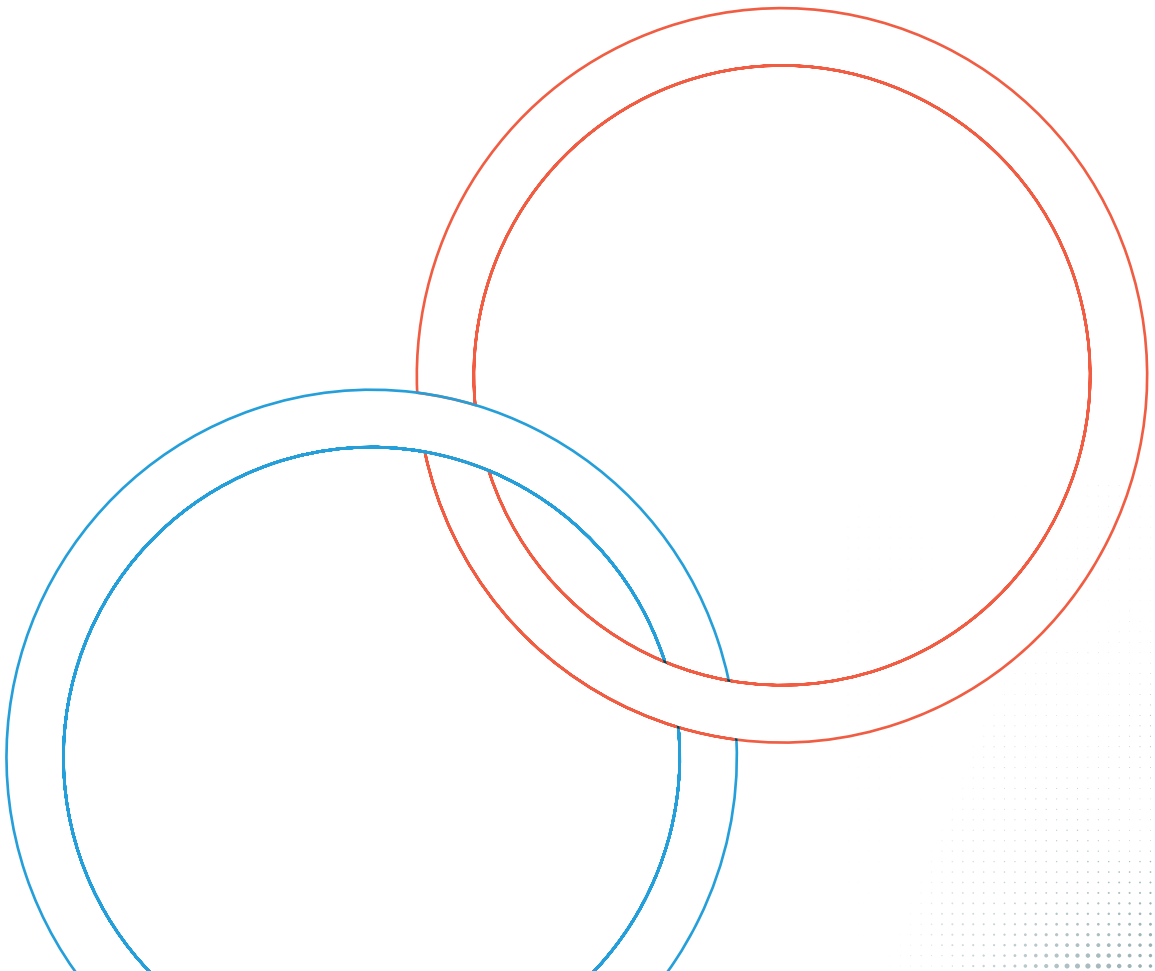
## The connectors include:

1. **Role of Women and Youth:** Despite facing systemic barriers, women and youth are crucial in promoting social cohesion and addressing community issues, albeit their potential is often underutilized. Women have emerged as key agents of change, taking on leadership roles in peacebuilding initiatives, community development, and conflict resolution efforts. They have demonstrated resilience and adaptability in the face of economic hardships, challenging traditional gender norms and expectations. Youth, while grappling with unemployment and limited opportunities, have also shown a strong desire to contribute positively to their communities, engaging in grassroots movements and advocating for social and political reforms.

2. **Community Resilience and Grassroots Initiatives:** Despite the numerous challenges faced, the 12 communities have demonstrated remarkable resilience and a strong capacity for self-organization and grassroots initiatives. Local NGOs, civil society organizations, and community leaders have stepped up to address pressing issues, provide essential services, and

promote dialogue and understanding among different groups. The emergence of organizations aimed at addressing mental health issues and advocating for increased awareness was also observed. These bottom-up efforts have played a crucial role in mitigating tensions, fostering social cohesion, and building local capacities for peace.

3. **Opportunities for Dialogue and Collaboration:** Despite the complex web of challenges, the conflict mapping exercise has also revealed opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and peacebuilding across the 12 communities. There are instances of successful initiatives that have brought together different groups, fostered mutual understanding, and promoted social cohesion. These examples highlight the potential for inclusive, community-driven approaches to conflict resolution and development. Building on these positive experiences and leveraging the expertise and resources of local actors, civil society organizations, and international partners can contribute to sustainable peace and stability in Lebanon.



# Community-Specific Findings

This section highlights key findings from the communities studied. While it captures essential trends and dynamics, the full report offers a more in-depth analysis and additional insights. For further details, please refer to the full document.

## 1. Mashta Hammoud/Mashta Hassan - Akkar

**Figure 1** **Map of Lebanon, highlighting Mashta Hammoud/Mashta Hassan - Akkar in red**

Known for its diverse population, Mashta Hammoud and Mashta Hassan have confronted significant demographic shifts and economic instability. Between 2000 and 2015, the Lebanese resident population declined by 34% while the Syrian refugee population surged, exceeding 2,000 by 2022. Persistent insecurity, unemployment, and economic instability are key drivers of local instability, with community members lamenting their ripple effects on social cohesion.

In navigating conflict, various peacebuilding and conflict resolution methods have emerged within the communities studied. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has been instrumental in fostering reconciliation by establishing a committee dedicated to addressing local issues. This initiative is complemented by the influence of expatriates on a national level and the efforts of grassroots organizations that focus on supporting vulnerable groups, particularly women. While these efforts are significant, they still fall short in addressing tensions around challenges like drug abuse and trafficking, often prompting local clans to intervene due to limited government presence.

For this reason, traditional conflict resolution methods continue to play a crucial role in these communities, often led by respected elders and community leaders. These approaches draw on deep-rooted cultural practices of mediation and reconciliation. Additionally, local NGOs contribute by facilitating dialogue and conducting educational workshops aimed at strengthening community ties and addressing the root causes of conflict. Within this framework, women, especially those in educational roles, are recognized as pillars of the community, influencing social cohesion and serving as moral guides in their households.

## 2. Fnaidek - Akkar

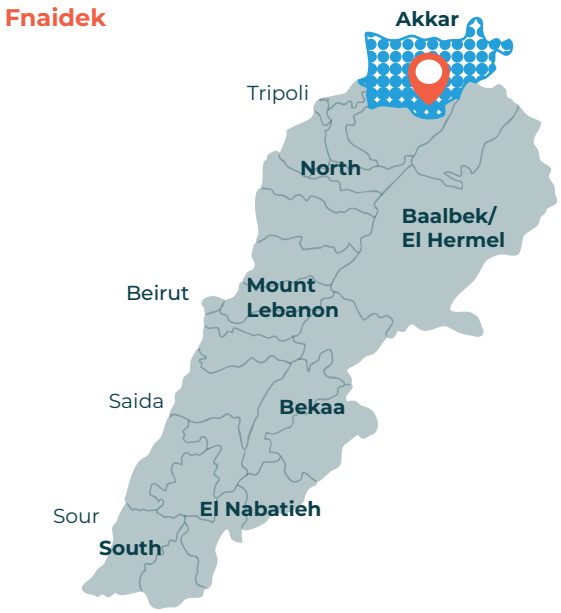



**Figure 2** **Map of Lebanon, highlighting Fnaidek - Akkar in red**

Fnaidek, located in one of the most deprived regions in the country, boasts a diverse population, predominantly Sunni Muslim, with a significant youth demographic and observed income disparities. There is a relatively low number of registered Syrian refugees in Fnaidek compared to its population.

Fnaidek faces significant economic challenges, as its main income sources—military and agricultural activities—have been adversely affected by the ongoing economic crisis. Politically, the landscape is influenced by historical affiliations, with a recent shift toward the National Moderation Bloc following the 2022 election. Additionally, smugglers and influential figures involved in illegal activities play a substantial role in shaping the socio-political dynamics of the community. The infusion of Syrian refugees adds another dimension, introducing both cultural diversity and strain on local resources. Economic pressures in Fnaidek are reshaping gender dynamics, pushing women—once limited to domestic roles—into the workforce to support their families and challenging traditional gender roles

In terms of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, local governance structures, particularly the mayor and tribal leaders, are crucial in preventing conflict escalation within the community. Also, the UNDP-supported reconciliation committee serves as a formal structure that brings together various segments of society to facilitate collaborative conflict resolution efforts.

## 3. Tikrit - Akkar

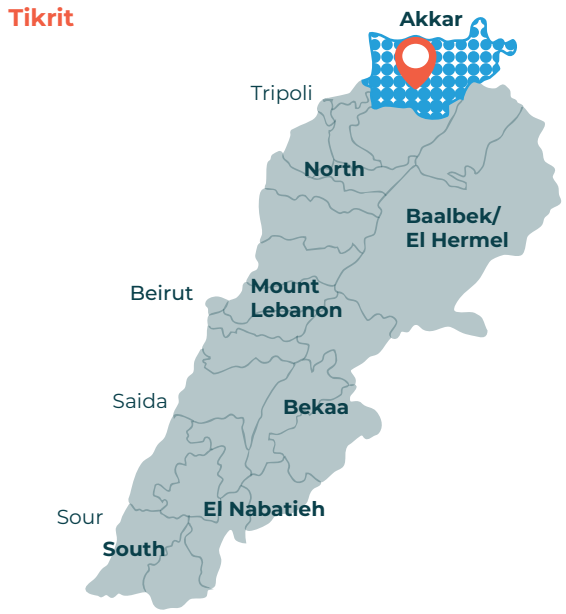



**Figure 3 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Tikrit - Akkar in red**

Tikrit's population comprises mostly Sunni Muslims and Greek Orthodox Christians, as well as other minority groups. A significant portion of Tikrit's population comprises young residents. Income disparities exist within Tikrit, with some areas being economically devastated.

Residents describe a governance system that has largely neglected its responsibilities, with political entities prioritizing power retention over community needs. This focus on maintaining power fosters a sense of dissatisfaction and disengagement among the populace.

Added to that, economic adversity is a central issue, significantly impacting community stability and exacerbating tensions. Furthermore, gender disparities complicate the situation, with women and marginalized groups disproportionately facing economic and social vulnerabilities. Together, these factors create a challenging environment that hinders progress and unity within Tikrit.

Peacebuilding and conflict resolution mechanisms in Tikrit prominently feature the engagement of local and religious leaders who mediate disputes and facilitate dialogue. Grassroots initiatives, driven by local youth and community groups, play a critical role in promoting social cohesion and environmental improvement. In response to the government's negligence in fulfilling its responsibilities, both local and international organizations step in to fill the gap.

## 4. Beddawi - Tripoli

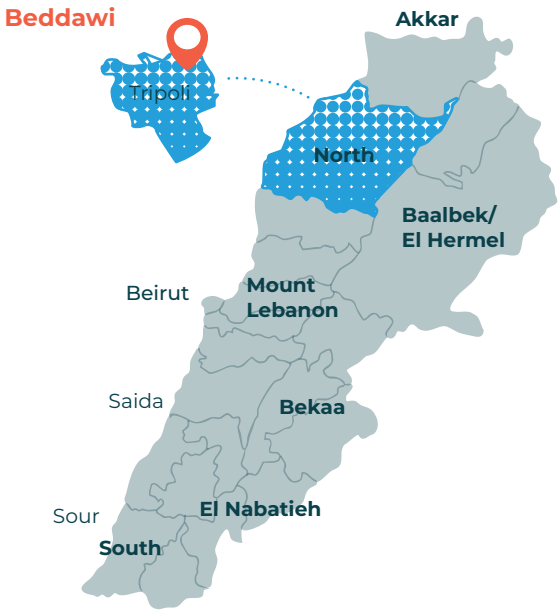



**Figure 4 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Beddawi (Tripoli) - the North in red**

Beddawi is a diverse town with a mix of ethnicities and religious groups. The population is predominantly Sunni Muslim. The town has a significant proportion of young adults. It hosts a major Palestinian camp that is very much infused into the social fabric of the town.

Economic instability and unemployment were highlighted as pivotal issues driving conflict within the community. The Lebanese and Palestinian communities, authorities, and other stakeholders alike identified economic hardship as a fundamental root cause of tensions. The influence of national and family/clan affiliations emerges as a significant theme. Criminal networks and political leaders exploit a lenient, corrupt justice system, where a lack of accountability and government intervention allows behaviors fueling tensions to go unchecked. The presence of Palestinian refugees adds another layer of complexity to the social dynamics. Issues related to competition for jobs and resources between refugees and host community members exist.

Conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives are actively promoted by local organizations within the Palestinian community, fostering unity through sports and social programs. Those organizations play a crucial role in mediating disputes through facilitating community dialogues that aim to address and mitigate tensions. Additionally, discussions within the Palestinian community highlight the cyclical nature of conflict, where those contributing to conflicts often engage in

efforts to resolve them. In contrast, the Lebanese community in Beddawi usually relies on informal mediation by respected elders and local leaders, yet there is a notable lack of effective figures or initiatives to address ongoing tensions.

## 5. Jabal Mohsen/Tebbeneh - Tripoli

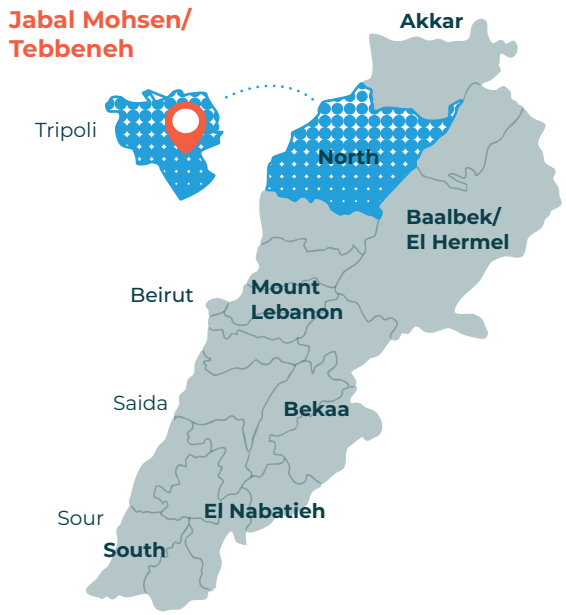



**Figure 5 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Jabal Mohsen/Tebbeneh (Tripoli) - the North in red**

While Jabal Mohsen is predominantly Alawite, Bab Al-Tebbeneh has a Sunni majority. This demographic divide has historically contributed to tensions. The town has a youthful population, with generational differences influencing social and political dynamics. We decided to join them into one profile due to the historical tensions between the two areas.

At the heart of the community's unrest lies a deep-seated economic crisis. Political dynamics are underscored as a pivotal element shaping the conflict landscape. Unemployment, particularly among youth, is spotlighted as both a symptom and catalyst of the prevailing tensions. Political entities, focused on power retention, have led to a widespread sentiment of neglect within the community. Gender disparities further complicate the landscape, with women and marginalized groups bearing the brunt of both economic and social vulnerabilities.

Political leaders emerge as catalysts of tension. Their actions, often swayed by personal and political agendas, weave a complex narrative of manipulation and neglect. The shadow of external influences looms large over Jabal Mohsen/Tebbeneh, with the presence of pro-Syrian regime and pro-Hezbollah affiliates, marked as significant contributors to the community's tensions. Those same political leaders also serve as potential harbingers of peace, often solving the tensions they initiated.

Peacebuilding and conflict resolution mechanisms in Jabal Mohsen-Tebbeneh include political committees established by major political parties to address conflicts between families and tribes. The community, deeply rooted in religious and familial networks, also benefits from the involvement of respected religious figures and mayors who bridge divides across different sects. Additionally, civil society organizations serve as important mechanisms for peace and conflict resolution. Grassroots initiatives led by local NGOs focus on community rebuilding and addressing tensions, while women's and youth organizations advocate for economic support and employment opportunities

## 6. Mina - Tripoli

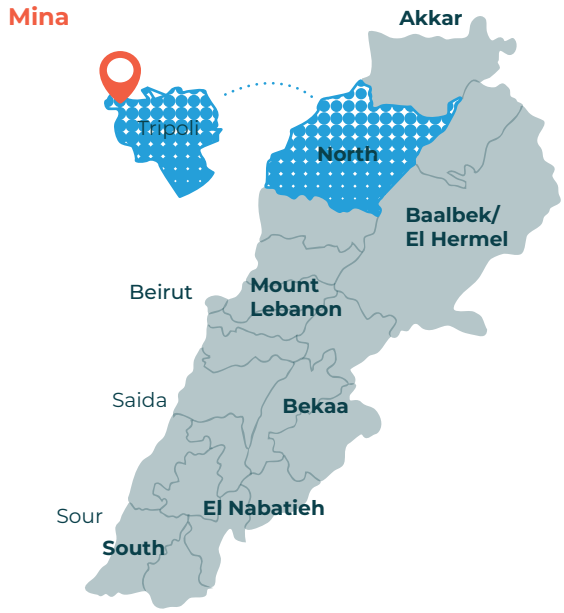



**Figure 6 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Mina (Tripoli) - the North in red**

Mina is characterized by a diverse population, including Sunni Muslims, Alawites, and Christians. Syrian refugees have also significantly impacted the demographic composition. The town has a substantial proportion of young adults, including both locals and Syrian refugees.

In Mina, the economic crisis is seen as the main cause of rising tensions in the community. Parallel to economic woes, educational shortcomings emerge as a critical axis of conflict. The decline in educational quality and the closure of religious institutions are lamented for eroding societal values and traditions, fostering a breeding ground for ignorance and violence. External influences, particularly pro-Syrian regime and pro-Hezbollah affiliates, significantly contribute to tensions in Mina.

In Mina, a comprehensive approach to peacebuilding employs both formal and informal mechanisms to manage community tensions. The municipality and religious institutions act as formal mediators, maintaining balance among diverse social and cultural groups. They address various issues

through active listening, thorough investigation, and strategic problem-solving, often collaborating with local and international organizations. Informal mechanisms, such as neighborhood groups and school associations led by women, also provide platforms for broader engagement in peacebuilding activities.

## 7. Deir Al-Ahmar – Baalbek/Hermel

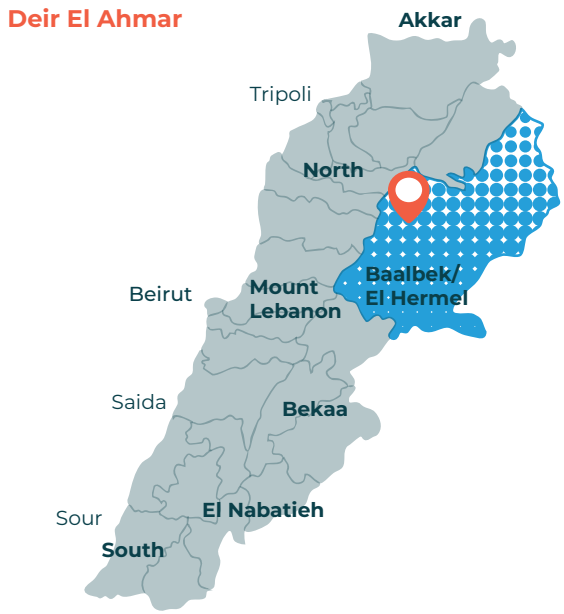



**Figure 7 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Deir Al-Ahmar - Baalbek-Hermel in red**

Deir Al-Ahmar is a town in the Bekaa region with a diverse population, mostly of the Christian Maronite sect. Displaced Syrian refugees have settled in informal camps on the outskirts of the town causing recurring tensions. More than 6,000 Syrians live in and around town, among approximately 23,000 residents.

The societal landscape of Deir Al-Ahmar is shaped by historical grievances, economic difficulties, and socio-political disparities. The prolonged absence of government intervention has led to economic instability and corruption, further escalating conflicts from both internal and external pressures.

Families and tribal groups there significantly contribute to local discord through illegal activities like kidnapping and drug dealing, exploiting the lack of government oversight and creating an atmosphere of fear. The Lebanese Forces and Hezbollah influence community dynamics and political landscapes, sometimes contributing to instability by navigating tensions for political advantage.

Economic competition and resource scarcity are viewed as primary drivers of tension, particularly between Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees. Positive actors, including women promoting peace, youth fostering reconciliation, and INGOs and NGOs providing aid, work alongside the municipal government to manage local services despite ongoing challenges. Local authorities and community leaders actively mitigate tensions through dialogue and negotiation. While international organizations contribute significantly, their solutions often overlook the root causes of conflict. In contrast, local institutions like churches and municipal authorities effectively mediate disputes stemming from economic disparities and facilitate dialogue between Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees competing for limited resources.

## 8. Baalbek – Baalbek/Hermel

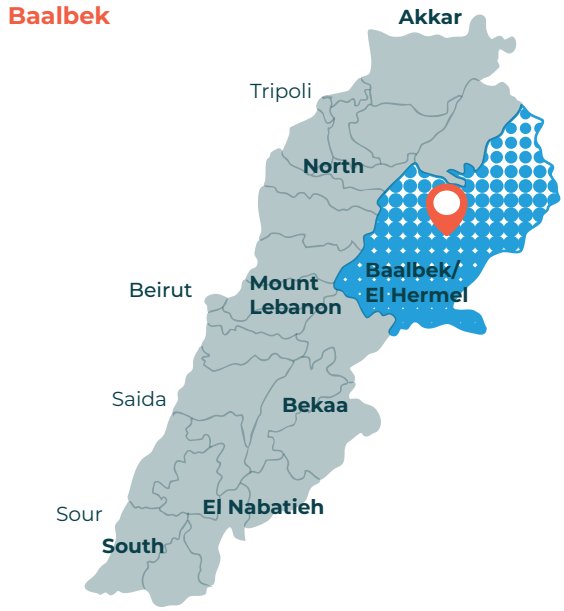



**Figure 8 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Baalbek - Baalbek-Hermel in red**

Baalbek's population comprises a diverse mix of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian refugees, and other groups. The majority are Muslim Shia, with Sunni and Christian minorities. Income disparities persist, with some areas experiencing higher poverty rates, exacerbated by illicit activities.

In Baalbek, the complex interplay of historical grievances, economic challenges, and socio-political disparities contributes to ongoing conflict and tension. A significant factor is the prolonged absence of government intervention, which local authorities perceive as a major cause of economic instability, corruption, and escalating conflicts. Political parties, notably Hezbollah and Amal, play a central role, sometimes intensifying disputes while at other times helping to quell them. The deteriorating economic crisis, characterized by rising unemployment, further aggravates these tensions. Within this environment, local actors such as tribes, families, and armed individuals exert considerable influence. Amidst this complex landscape, women, youth, and vulnerable groups are the ones suffering the most.

Conflict resolution efforts in Baalbek rely heavily on the contributions of various actors and organizations. Political parties often establish commit-

tees to address family tensions, reflecting a structured approach to conflict management. The community also benefits from the interventions of respected religious figures and mayors who facilitate dialogue across sects. Positive contributions come from women and youth promoting peace, international organizations providing humanitarian aid, and local groups supporting education and women's rights.

## 9. Saida – South Lebanon

**Figure 9 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Saida - South Lebanon in red**

Saida is known for its diverse population. It is home to a mix of Shia and Sunni Muslims, as well as Christians, contributing to its ethnic and religious diversity. The city's demographic makeup is influenced by its historical significance and geographical location. Saida hosts the Ain Al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp, the largest in the country.

Conflicts in Saida are heavily influenced by political parties and sectarian groups that exploit Lebanon's entrenched sectarian system. The Palestinian leadership also plays a crucial role, with their actions significantly impacting the community's socio-economic conditions. Those political entities often perpetuate discord by exploiting sectarian divisions for their own benefit.

Key factors fueling tensions include economic instability, sectarian differences, and refugee dynamics. Economic challenges, coupled with discrimination against Palestinian refugees—such as limited access to employment, education, and healthcare—along with bureaucratic obstacles like the difficulty of obtaining work permits and the restrictions on property ownership, intensify frustrations within the community.

This instability not only hinders economic growth but also fosters interpersonal conflicts and negative sentiments among various groups.

Peacebuilding efforts in this area rely on collaboration among Lebanese leaders to resolve disputes, while Palestinian communities address challenges on a short-term basis rather than finding long-term solutions. Enhancing these initiatives requires cooperation with local NGOs and support for youth and women's programs. Various actors, including civil society and international organizations, contribute positively and significantly to advocacy and the provision of essential services, despite external challenges.

## 10. Barja – Mount Lebanon

**Figure 10 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Barja - Mount Lebanon in red**

Barja's population is predominantly inhabited by Sunni Muslims. The age distribution in Barja is diverse, representing multiple generations, with varying degrees of traditional and modern values.

In Barja, political divisions and ineffective leadership, along with economic disparities and systemic corruption, fuel conflict. The government faces criticism for exacerbating tensions through school closures and neglecting security and development projects, significantly affecting marginalized youth with limited opportunities. Non-state groups and political parties can act as drivers of tensions or as conflict resolution actors, depending on the situation at hand. While women's opinions are valued, challenges arise when they pursue roles in politics traditionally associated with men.

In terms of mitigating tensions, community-based dialogues serve as a primary mechanism for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. These dialogues operate on the premise of inclusivity, bringing together diverse groups within the commu-

nity to discuss issues and negotiate differences. However, the peacebuilding process in Barja is not without its complexities since different communities within the town exhibit varying levels of conflict and cooperation.

Added to that, women, youth, and vulnerable groups play essential roles in conflict resolution and community stability, through engaging in workshops and entrepreneurial efforts.

## 11. Hay el Gharbeh/Ghobeiri – Mount Lebanon

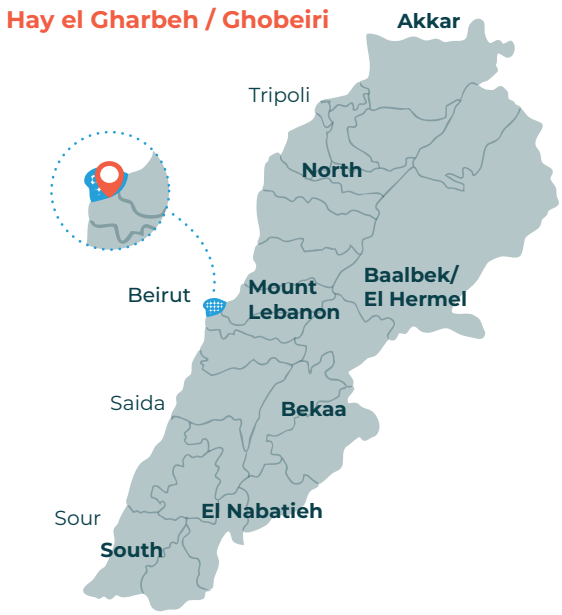



**Figure 11 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Hay el Gharbeh/Ghobeiri - Mount Lebanon in red**

Hay el Gharbeh/Ghobeiri does not appear on Google Maps, as it is an informal settlement. Part of its population includes stateless people and children. It is inhabited by mostly Shia Muslims along with Sunni Palestinian refugees who reside in the adjacent Sabra Palestinian Refugee Camp.

Political parties like Hezbollah and Amal play a central role in shaping tensions within the community, sometimes exacerbating disputes. Discriminatory practices based on nationality and religion further deepen societal divides, leading to conflict. The presence of armed gangs complicates the situation, as they often engage in a range of illicit activities, from drug trade to armed robbery, thriving in the absence of effective government intervention. Also, there is a sense of injustice stemming from socio-economic disparities and the uneven distribution of aid and services. Additionally, gangs manipulate local informal and illicit activities, perpetuating conflict. Economic instability and unemployment are critical issues, often leaving marginalized groups—youth, women, and the economically disadvantaged—particularly vulnerable.

In Hay el Gharbeh, conflict resolution relies on key actors and organizations, as well as influential figures supported by Hezbollah. Community-based initiatives are vital for maintaining order and resolving disputes, with informal leaders playing an important role in mediation and dialogue. Additionally, CSOs in this area focus on mental well-being, especially for women and youth affected by conflict. Grassroots initiatives promote social cohesion and cultural heritage, fostering hope in bridging community divides.

## 12. Chiyah-Ain El Remmeneh – Mount Lebanon

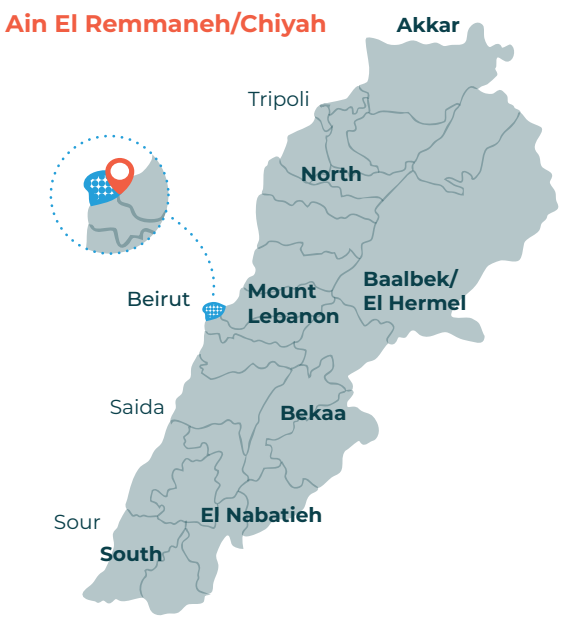


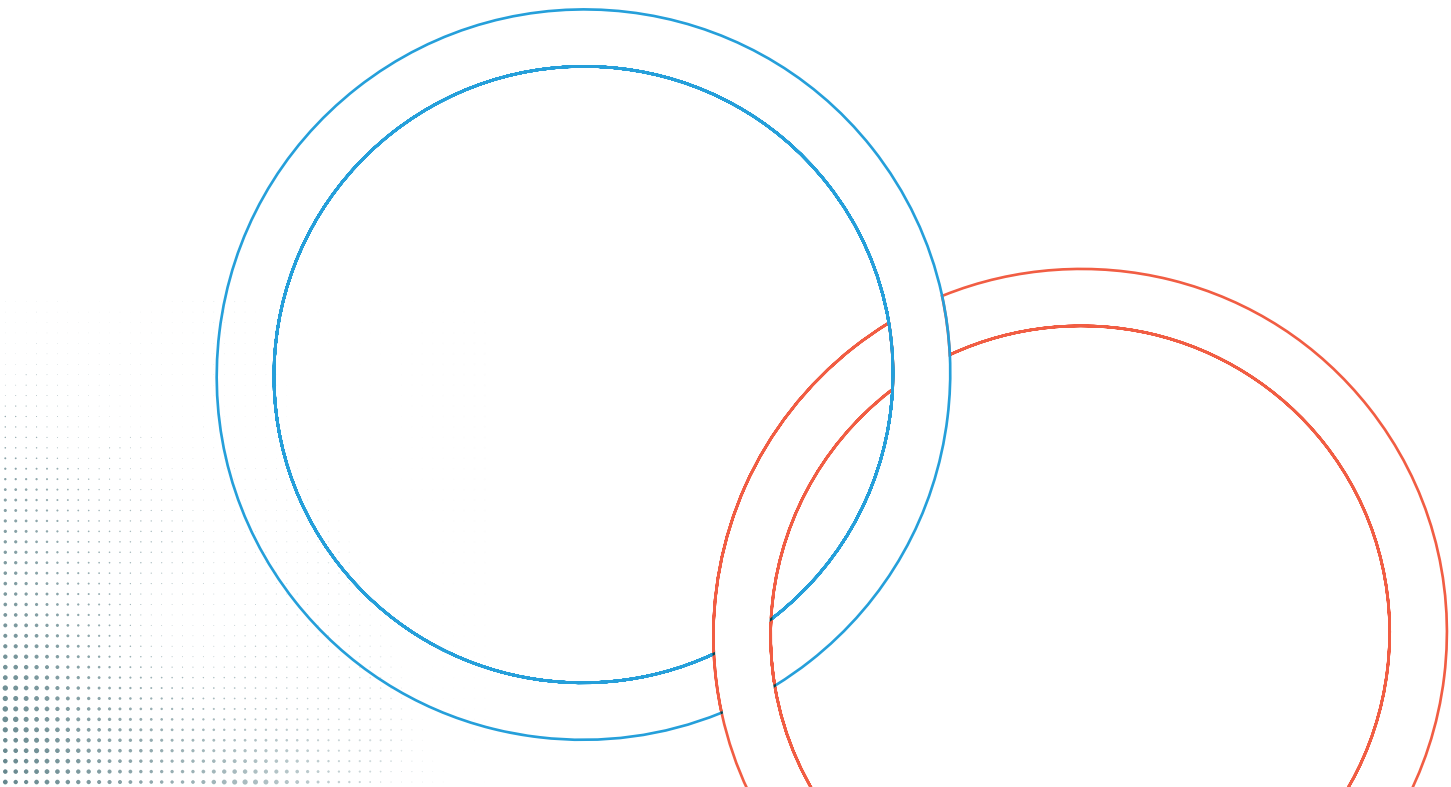

**Figure 12 Map of Lebanon, highlighting Chiyah-Ain El Remmeneh - Mount Lebanon in red**

Chiyah's population is predominantly Shia Muslim and Christian Maronite; the latter are concentrated in the area of Ain El Remmeneh within Chiyah. The age distribution in Chiyah is diverse, with a mix of young and older residents. Income disparities exist within the neighborhood, with pockets of poverty amidst relatively better-off areas.

Chiyah is marked by political divisions, with the Shia community aligned with Hezbollah and the Amal Movement, while Ain El Remmeneh is predominantly controlled by the Lebanese Forces. Tensions intensified in 2021 when clashes erupted during a Shia-led protest against the Port explosion investigation, leading protesters to attempt crossing into the Christian area. Basic services like healthcare and education are unevenly available, compounded by an influx of Syrian refugees that strains resources and heightens social tensions. Sectarian disputes, political conflicts, and resource competition pose significant risks for further unrest. Vulnerable groups, particularly women, youth, and those with disabilities, face adverse impacts on their daily lives and mental health due to ongoing conflicts. Political parties exploit these divisions to consolidate power, employing a "divide

and conquer" strategy that adapts to the current context.

The communities in those areas acknowledge the urgent need for initiatives to promote social stability, emphasizing awareness-raising sessions and educational discussions to correct misunderstandings. Those areas employ both formal mechanisms, with the municipality intervening in escalated conflicts, and informal ones, where clan leaders mediate disputes. However, peace efforts are often hindered by a lack of dedicated mediators, leading to reliance on the municipality and security frameworks amidst Lebanon's political fragmentation, where supporters of different political parties (including at the municipal level) prioritize loyalty to leaders over the public interest. Despite all the perceived challenges, women and youth often act as drivers of peacebuilding initiatives, while municipalities support social and educational development within their community.



# Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the conflict mapping reveals a complex interplay of economic, political, and sectarian tensions within Lebanese communities, yet also highlights their resilience and capacity for grassroots peacebuilding. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that fosters economic empowerment, inclusive governance, and community-driven solutions. The accompanying recommendations provide a roadmap for sustainable peace and social cohesion in Lebanon.

**1. Economic Empowerment and Job Creation:**

- Implement vocational training programs tailored to local market needs
- Support small businesses and entrepreneurship, especially for women and youth
- Encourage public-private partnerships for infrastructure projects and local industries

**2. Educational Enhancements and Youth Engagement**:

- Strengthen educational infrastructure and improve access
- Integrate vocational training with formal education
- Create platforms for youth leadership and participation in community development
- Implement drug prevention and rehabilitation programs

**3. Gender Inclusivity in Peace-Building Efforts:**

- Design mentorship and training programs for women in leadership and entrepreneurship
- Establish safe spaces for women to access support services and build networks
- Promote gender sensitivity training within communities and local governance

**4. Fostering Social Cohesion:**

- Support grassroots initiatives and local NGOs in conflict mediation
- Facilitate inter-community events and cultural exchanges
- Invest in community centers for recreational, educational, and social services

**5. Transparent Governance and Inclusive Political Processes:**

- Enhance local governance capacity in conflict sensitivity and inclusive decision-making
- Implement mechanisms for community participation in governance
- Advocate for equitable development policies at the national level

**6. International Support and Collaboration:**

- Align international support with locally identified priorities
- Facilitate partnerships between Lebanese communities and international counterparts
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of international aid on social cohesion

**7. Environmental Sustainability:**

- Implement sustainable water and land management practices
- Promote community-led environmental restoration projects
- Invest in renewable energy projects and promote energy-efficient practices

These recommendations aim to address the root causes of conflict, promote social cohesion, and build community resilience across the studied areas in Lebanon. They emphasize the importance of economic development, education, gender inclusivity, good governance, and environmental sustainability in peacebuilding efforts.

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